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CONTENTS



| | |
|------------------------|----|
| ▶ EDITOR'S NOTE | 4 |
| ▶ UNITED STATES | 7 |
| ▶ CANADA | 27 |
| ▶ UNITED KINGDOM | 34 |
| ▶ EUROPE | 40 |
| ▶ AUSTRALIA | 48 |
| ▶ ASIA | 50 |
| ▶ INTERNATIONAL | 54 |
| ▶ FUNDERS | 60 |



PITCH PERFECT

Welcome to the second annual edition of *realscreen's* Global Pitch Guide, designed to give producers and sellers of content the intel they need to find the right buyers for their projects, and the information to help them shape their pitches effectively.

As with last year's guide, we've spanned the globe via email, phone and even airplane to bring scores of commissioning editors and programmers into these pages. You'll see some new faces and new networks represented here, and we thank all of the execs who took the time out to pass along their thoughts and tips. We've broken down the info into key elements: what each exec's network is looking for, the best way to pitch your project to them, vital contact info, and the definite "don'ts" that you should avoid when making your pitch. As I said last year, while there may be some names absent this time around, it won't stop us from trying to get their input next time.

We've also added a section dealing with funders, where those of you working on documentary projects can see which funding programs and grant initiatives your docs might be best suited for.

We hope this second edition of the Global Pitch Guide will be a trusted companion for you as you make your way to the markets this year, from MIPCOM to the Realscreen Summit and beyond. Please feel free to pass along thoughts on this year's model to me via bwalsh@brunico.com. Also look for more commissioning editors in our online version of the guide, at realscreen.com

Here's hoping that this guide will make the pitching process a little less mysterious, and perhaps even a little more enjoyable.

Cheers,

Barry Walsh, editor, *realscreen*

realscreen

The **best** in non-fiction ▶▶

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UNITED STATES

A&E NETWORK ▶

WHAT HE'S LOOKING FOR:

McKillop emphasizes that authentic storytelling is on top of the A&E checklist when it comes to greenlighting programs. "We want unique programming that is anything but derivative," he says. "So find a new genre and then create the category killer in that genre. Then move on to the next thing." With an audience split of 65% women and 35% men in the adult 18-49 and 25-54 demos, McKillop says programs with "authentic, real-life characters" resonate best with viewers.

"Series such as *Storage Wars*, *Billy the Exterminator* and *Gene Simmons Family Jewels* all offer unique portraits of people who are doing exactly what they'd be doing with or without our cameras over their shoulders," says McKillop.

Still, McKillop says that while producers should be well aware that A&E is the "Real Life. Drama" network, they shouldn't stress too much about fitting an idea into an A&E template.

"People watch programs, not networks. So don't worry about how your show idea fits A&E," he offers. "Only my team has intimate knowledge of what we're looking for at the moment. So come in with your best idea and if we like it, we'll figure out how to make it work. That's our job."

HOW TO PITCH:

"Good tape is worth a thousand treatments," he advises. "Come in with tape, a great concept and/or a well-written paragraph that opens up the discussion and we'll figure out how to make it work. A kernel of a great idea can be better than the 'perfect pitch.'" Also, if you have great talent or a great character but haven't got the show fully fleshed out, bring him or her in for the pitch. "If we like what we see, we'll get to work and see if we can develop our next great series together," says McKillop.

Also, if McKillop isn't able to take the pitch personally, don't fret. "We have some of the best programmers in the world on our staff and producers should know they're in good hands when pitching to them."



DAVID MCKILLOP
EVP, PROGRAMMING

Lastly, make sure your idea will have some legs. "Another mistake I find all too common is you shouldn't come to us with a great pilot but no concept for a series," he says. "I call it 'P2' — meaning 'pilot - plan.' It is hard to invest in something that has nowhere to go after six episodes. We're looking for series that have longevity."

Contact development executives through their assistants: Elaine Frontain Bryant and Neil Cohen can be reached through Crystal.Scott@aetn.com, and Lily Neumeyer and Laura Fleury through Nicole.Tossou@aetn.com. ■■

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ANIMAL PLANET ▶

WHAT HE'S LOOKING FOR:

Animal Planet commissions or coproduces approximately 300 to 350 original hours per year. Currently the Discovery Communications network is commissioning primarily for primetime. "Our shows need to compete for eyeballs with networks outside of the natural history and factual entertainment space, and we're not satisfied with just being the most watched animal network on TV," says Holzman. Animal Planet's key areas of subject matter are man and nature, personal ordeals, pets and people, and contemporary natural history.

What works for the net are larger-than-life personalities depicted in their authentic worlds, as well as programming with a sense of humor, which Holzman says is a newfound area for Animal Planet. It focuses on longer-running series more so than one-offs, and for a special to work, it will need to be loud and generate its own buzz to cut through the competitive noise.

For traditional presenter-led natural history docs, which Holzman feels are "suffering a bit from 'retinal burn' and sameness" they'll have to be unique in look, feel and POV.

HOW TO PITCH:

Almost all pitches come through the network's development department, overseen by VPs Marc Etkind and Charlie Foley. "While we receive everything from one-sheets to spec half hours, initial pitches can be on paper alone; however, if the show is personality-driven, we prefer to see a character tape," offers Holzman. "From there, we decide if we need to go to a full demo or not."

WHAT IT PAYS:

Holzman says budgets can range from US\$250,000-\$750,000 per hour. "The sweet spot is the \$300,000 range," he says. ■■



RICK HOLZMAN
SVP PROGRAMMING

“We’re not satisfied with just being the most watched animal network”

WHAT HE'S LOOKING FOR:

Lehrer says the Bravo core demographic can be broken into two groups — the “Will & Gracers” and the “PTA Trendsetters.” Of the former group, Lehrer says they’re “affluent, cosmopolitan, mostly single” and of the latter, think of a more suburban but still affluent group, mostly moms and still engaged with pop culture. “The shows that work best on the channel tend to speak to both groups, whether it’s *Real Housewives* or *Top Chef*, *Millionaire Matchmaker* or *Flipping Out*,” says Lehrer.

Shows are primarily character-oriented and “tend to focus on people with a unique skill-set and a larger than life personality, and give the viewer access and insight into a world that has wide appeal to our upscale, educated audience,” offers Lehrer. Bravo opts to provide intimate looks into the lives of “people who are at the top of their game, whether it’s in real estate, matchmaking, styling or cooking.” But remember that those characters “need to be credible, talented and entertaining,” he adds.

A first season for a program can result in six-to-eight one-hour eps, which would then increase with subsequent seasons. “This year, for the first time, we’re putting a few half-hour shows on the air as well, and those first cycle orders tend to be a little larger,” he says.

HOW TO PITCH:

While the majority of programming comes via the traditional channels — major agencies and prodcos the NBC Universal-owned net has relationships with — Lehrer says there is “a process for vetting unsolicited pitches, once the appropriate paperwork has been signed, and we make it a point to review everything that comes to us that way.” Keep in mind, however, that of the thousands of unsolicited pitches Bravo receives, Lehrer can only think of “two or three” that the team has chosen to develop. Compelling tape should always be part of the pitch. And while some producers, in lieu of tape, have brought their characters in for face-to-face meetings, Lehrer says “that’s always a crapshoot. Not everyone does well in a room like that, even if they may be ‘great’ talent.”



ELI LEHRER
VP DEVELOPMENT

WHAT TO AVOID:

“One thing that’s never promising is when someone comes in and pitches us an idea that’s very similar to something that we’ve already announced as being in development or picked-up to series,” Lehrer cautions. Thus, do your research, check what the net has announced in its development slates (via outlets such as *realscreen*), and ask yourself how your project will fit the channel’s current direction.

WHERE TO FIND HIM:

Realscreen Summit, NATPE and MIPCOM. As the net moves more into development in the format space, “we’re a little more open to the international formats we find at MIP,” he says. ■■

DIY NETWORK ▶

WHAT HE'S LOOKING FOR:

Scripps Networks Interactive's DIY Network aims for adults 25-54, with "a slightly male skew and an edgy sensibility," says Babbit. Current hits include the *Crashers* franchise (*Yard Crashers*, *House Crashers*, *Bath Crashers*), *Renovation Realities*, and *The Vanilla Ice Project*, which sees the rapper get busy with home reno.

"We're always looking for new and interesting ways to present informational 'home' content, but above all, it needs to be entertaining and fun," he says. "Charismatic expert talent is a big plus." What doesn't work? "Anything that feels contrived or fake."

A typical order can consist of an airable pilot or five episodes for a new series. DIY Network commissions roughly 350 hours per year, with 90% of the content original and the other 10% acquisitions.



ROSS BABBIT

SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT, GENERAL MANAGER

HOW TO PITCH:

Send pitches directly to Babbit via email (rbabbit@diynetwork.com) and copy Paula Manlove (pmanlove@diynetwork.com). A release is needed for all pitches, but it does not need to come through an agent or lawyer. The pitch should include a brief one-sheet, and "if at all possible, tape," says Babbit. "Tape sells better than anything, even if it's raw."

HOW NOT TO PITCH:

Make sure you're well familiar with the net before hitting 'send' on your pitch. Babbit advises that full episodes of most of the network's series are available to be viewed via DIYNetwork.com. Check them out and whatever you do, "Don't pitch us something that's already on the air."

WHERE TO FIND HIM:

Babbit regularly attends the Realscreen Summit and The Realscreen Factual Entertainment Forum. ■■

“We’re always looking for new ways to present informational home content”



DISCOVERY CHANNEL

WHAT THEY'RE LOOKING FOR

Discovery's key demo is adults 25-54, with audiences for its biggest hits skewing 60% male and 40% female, according to Gavin and Andreae. Male or female, the Discovery audience is united in its "vivid sense of physical and intellectual adventure." Both development execs say that "sweeping epic narrative," as seen in the net's hits *Deadliest Catch* and *Gold Rush: Alaska* is a tentpole of the brand, with "the genius of the everyman" also being a successful programming theme, as seen in *Sons of Guns*. "At our very core, we celebrate something deep in the human spirit by highlighting characters who live by their own rules and who 'are what they do,'" they say. "More than anything, we strive to give our audiences an authentic experience."

HOW TO PITCH

Andreae and Gavin say producers can pitch anyone on the Discovery Channel development team. While the network has development offices on both coasts, it shares one pipeline; thus, producers should only pitch one coast with their projects to avoid confusion. For the East Coast, a producer's first point of contact should be Amy Savitsky or Matt Kelly and on the West Coast, Sean Boyle or Nicole Reed.

Also, the Discovery producers portal, <https://producers.discovery.com>, allows producers to submit ideas to any network in the Discovery Communications family. Pitches don't need to come through lawyers or agents, but should be at least one-pagers. "While not a must have, tape is certainly the most effective way for any producer to clearly articulate the show's vision," say the execs.

Andreae and Gavin advise producers to do their homework. "Know our schedule and what has and has



SIMON ANDREAЕ

SVP DEVELOPMENT & PRODUCTION



DOLORES GAVIN

SVP DEVELOPMENT & PRODUCTION

not worked on our air. We know our brand and how to shape raw ideas into Discovery shows," they say. "The business of development is about collaboration and building on ideas until the best ones rise to the top." Also avoid pitching something that's worked on another network. "Be innovative and challenge us as programmers."

WHERE TO FIND THEM

Realscreen Summit, the Realscreen Factual Entertainment Forum, MIPTV and MIPCOM, Jackson Hole and Westdoc are among the team's top markets. "When there is a market, someone from Discovery is usually there," they say. ■■

“We strive to give our audiences an authentic experience”








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THE DOCUMENTARY CHANNEL ▶

WHAT SHE'S LOOKING FOR:

Currently the non-fiction specialty channel is dealing mostly with acquisitions and is in the "early days" of commissioning films. "We are a movie channel with documentaries as our genre, so as long as it is a great story, we're open to it," Pearson says. "That said, people love a good scandal or controversy, don't they?"

She adds that mysteries and "the unexplained" also work for the channel. Pearson says it is looking mostly for one-off films, and although there is room for series, it is very selective. "The series has to be what we consider to be a true documentary series," she maintains. "No reality series."

HOW TO PITCH:

Documentary Channel has a general submission form on its website, while producers can also contact the director of acquisitions, Dorothy Henckel (dhenckel@documentarychannel.com), to send trailers and finished films. Treatments or earlier stage concepts can be sent to Pearson (kpearson@documentarychannel.com). A pitching hint is to know where the channel, available via Dish Network and DirecTV, is distributed and what its programming looks like.

WHAT THEY PAY:

"We have a broad range of pricing which takes many factors into account, including whether it's a first or second run, whether it has won awards, and whether it is part of a package from a vendor," says Pearson.

WHERE TO FIND HER:

Pearson attends Sundance, Big Sky, Hot Docs, Full Frame, Tribeca, "sometimes" Sheffield Doc/Fest, IDFA and MIPDoc. ■■



KATE PEARSON
SVP PROGRAMMING

“Series have to be what we consider to be true documentary series”

E! ENTERTAINMENT NETWORK ▶

WHAT SHE'S LOOKING FOR:

Docusoaps and self-contained formats are a large part of the series development slate for the NBCUniversal-owned network, which boasts hits like the Kardashians franchises — *Keeping Up with the Kardashians*, *Khloe and Lamar*, *Kim and Kourtney Take New York* — as well as *Kendra* and *Ice Loves Coca*. “Shows must feel upscale, glamorous and have some sense of aspiration,” says Dogan.

HOW TO PITCH:

Tape is preferable although not an absolute requirement. An agent should contact one of the development executives with a logline and they can then decide if it's a pitch they want to hear. The team rarely takes unsolicited pitches without an agent attached, but if it does, the producer must sign a submissions release. Dogan also advises against bringing a pitch centered on a talent without having the talent actually attached. ■■



DAMLA DOGAN
SVP, ORIGINAL PROGRAMMING & SERIES
DEVELOPMENT

OXYGEN ▶

WHAT SHE'S LOOKING FOR:

As the net is growing its non-scripted original fare, Abraham says that “our efforts are focused on creating buzzy original programming for cable prime.” A range of programming works for the net — from docu-series, big competition and dating series to self-contained formats — providing it contains characters that correspond with Oxygen’s “Live Out Loud” tagline.

Oxygen, a sister net to E!, prefers series to one-offs. Abraham calls the Oxygen audience “Generation O” — young women at various stages of transitioning, from college graduation to first jobs, relationships and apartments.

HOW TO PITCH:

While Abraham and team prefer to be pitched via representation they are also open to any method of pitch, which can be a logline, one-sheet or bible. The one caveat — it has to be “a compelling idea that fits with our brand and audience.”



CORI ABRAHAM
SVP DEVELOPMENT

HOW NOT TO PITCH:

“Don’t try to oversell - if it’s a good idea and we’re intrigued, we’ll develop it,” says Abraham. ■■

HISTORY ▶

WHAT HE'S LOOKING FOR:

Hoogstra says the audience demo for History is 68% male, and comprised of core viewers who've been with the net since its 1995 launch and newer, younger viewers. "Our viewers are very savvy and want authentic original programming that they can connect with on multiple levels," he adds. "They like to be surprised and are voracious information seekers. So, we are always taking a fresh look and bringing a new take to History at every turn, literally and figuratively."

Characters and a blending of history and entertainment are also key elements for History programming. The net has made its mark with "workumentary" programming such as *Ice Road Truckers* and *Ax Men* and propelled the "artifactual" genre with hits such as *Pawn Stars*, *American Pickers* and the recent *American Restoration*. Series such as the competition program *Top Shot* and the U.S. version of *Top Gear* have represented new territory for the net, and Hoogstra says pushing forward is a key ingredient to its success.

"We love *Top Shot* as do our viewers, and we're considering some other unique competition shows, but we don't want to overload that space," offers Hoogstra. "We deliberately don't have a heavy filter so we can continue to innovate and push into new categories."

The programming strategy is series-based but with opportunities for big, targeted specials as they're "part of our core DNA at History and they stand out as the definitive record of the subjects they cover."

HOW TO PITCH:

"All of our execs take pitches, develop projects and oversee greenlit projects editorially," says Hoogstra. "Unfortunately, we don't take unsolicited proposals."

By way of advice for pitching producers, he offers this: "We continue to raise the bar and take History to places none of us have been before. I'll never say never, but keep in mind that we are male skewing and we're looking for shows we don't have, not what is already on our air." ■■



DIRK HOOGSTRA

SVP DEVELOPMENT & PROGRAMMING

“Our viewers like to be surprised and are voracious info-seekers”

LIFETIME ▶

WHAT HE'S LOOKING FOR:

Lifetime, says Sharenow, "is and always will be a female-skewing network," targeting women in both the 18-49 and 25-54 demos. "That said, I think one of the mistakes people have made in the past is to pitch us programming that is exclusively targeted toward women," he says. Coming over to Lifetime from his previous programming gig at A&E, Sharenow says he hopes to "broaden our audience to not exclude men." Of the non-fiction that's clicked on the A-E Networks brand as of late, Sharenow cites the venerable *Project Runway* as well as *Coming Home*, a series about veterans returning from war to surprise their families, and its version of the Brit hit *One Born Every Minute*, a fixed-camera maternity ward series.

As for central elements of programming that make it a right fit for Lifetime, Sharenow says the net looks for shows with a strong emotional core and compelling, relatable characters. "We are a brand that unapologetically embraces emotion in a way that other brands don't," he offers. Order numbers vary from a minimum of four to a maximum of 26 for a first season.

WHAT HE'S NOT LOOKING FOR:

While he doesn't want to exclude men from watching Lifetime, don't lean too heavy on the testosterone with your pitch, as "anything that skews male would be a challenge." And keep it fresh. "We are not looking to replicate other networks' successes," he maintains. "If something feels derivative, there has got to be an extremely compelling or differentiating element or reason for us to want to do the show."

HOW TO PITCH:

Pitches are preferred to come through legitimate agents or lawyers but, provided you're willing to sign a waiver, the net is open to unrepresented pitches. If you're pitching a character, it's best to have tape and a talent deal signed. Generally, tape is preferred but isn't completely necessary if you're pitching a format. "In fact, sometimes I prefer just hearing a pitch rather than seeing a sloppy mock-up



ROB SHARENOW
EVP PROGRAMMING

sizzle tape with elements culled from other shows," says Sharenow. Gena McCarthy heads up the non-fiction department for Lifetime and pitches can be sent to her assistant, Katherine Webb, via Katherine.webb@aetn.com. She'll then direct the pitch to the appropriate person.

PITCHING DON'TS:

Sharenow says producers should eradicate any preconceived notions about the typical Lifetime viewer. "I think viewers across television are fairly sophisticated and want original ideas that are exciting or innovative in some way," he says. "I would advise producers not to filter with us. We want to hear the best pitches, with the most exciting characters and ideas. Lifetime is a general entertainment brand and we can usually find a way to make a great idea work for us." ■■



NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC CHANNEL ▶

WHAT SHE'S LOOKING FOR:

Whalen Hunnicutt says last year's move to a more global approach towards development and programming has led to a series slate increase of 20% this year and that series such as *Alaska State Troopers*, *Locked Up Abroad*, *Wild Justice* and *Taboo* are getting great traction. But specials are still important to the net as well. "Along with character-driven and entertaining series, we remain committed to doing high-profile specials driven by both amazing visuals and new discoveries," she says.

As for what specifically makes a program right for NGC, Whalen Hunnicutt says it "primarily looks for concepts that provide fresh insights and exclusive access while highlighting dynamic characters and images." Entertaining, relevant and accessible science programming is still a staple of the net, as is programming about "extraordinary" expeditions. "The channel is open to experimenting with new formats," she says. "Our goal is to develop the best format, whatever that may be, to execute the best ideas." In terms of a target demo, think 25-54, and slightly male-skewing. Whalen Hunnicutt says the net's biggest hits tend to have male and female appeal, citing the series listed above and specials such as *Restrepo: Afghan Outpost*, *Drugs Inc.*, and *Witness: Disaster in Japan* as examples.

HOW TO PITCH:

Proposals can be submitted to NGC and its sister net, Nat Geo Wild, through NGCIdeas.com, through which they are assigned to assorted development representatives from the respective network. Accompanying the submission with tape is encouraged but not completely necessary. Also take note that with the majority of NGC's projects, the net works directly with producers and directors.

PITCHING DON'TS:

While you may think that an idea in your arsenal may not be up NGC's alley, you're advised to not filter yourself when making your pitch. "We may see in that idea a fresh angle or insight that would be perfect for our network as a companion piece or new concept to try," says Whalen Hunnicutt. "I encourage



BRIDGET WHALEN HUNNICUTT
SVP GLOBAL DEVELOPMENT AND PRODUCTION

producers to provide all their ideas and be open to feedback that could lead to a successful program.

"National Geographic isn't limited to adventure, travel and Everest and Egypt stories," she continues. "We do those subjects well but we can and do cover so much more. NGC can tackle any issue, character, story in the universe as long as it has the right approach. We do contemporary history, character-driven series, culture, science and more." ■■

NAT GEO WILD ▶

WHAT SHE'S LOOKING FOR:

Han Vissering says that after a year on the air, Nat Geo Wild has established itself as a "family-friendly destination within the Pay TV marketplace," citing a stat that out of 80 adult cable networks in the U.S., Wild is among the top five in family co-viewing. While the target demo is similar to its sister net, National Geographic Channel, Wild also aims for parents within that demo, with kids ranging in age from two to 17. "Our goal is to continue this aggressive audience expansion with shows that draw in families, attract women and those who may not normally come to an animal-focused network," she says.

Another important distinction to keep in mind is that Wild is devoted to natural history. "Our content must be ideas that are relevant and related to animals and to the wild world," offers Han Vissering. "Stories can be rooted in science, exploration, conservation, travel, adventure, people/animals, pets [or] comedy. They can be character-driven, personality-led, hosted or purely behavioral."

Nat Geo Wild is looking for series and specials, with initial series commitments running between six to eight episodes. As the net works with commissions, coproduction, presales and acquiring finished programs, "trying to pin a budget is difficult," she says. "What producers should know is that we are flexible, competitive and fair."

HOW TO PITCH:

Pitches can be sent through lawyers, agents, or directly from producers but Han Vissering advises that they should all go through the NGCIdeas.com portal. It's also helpful to additionally send the pitch to Wild coordinator Linh Le at lle@natgeotv.com. And keep an open mind. "We want to hear all ideas, whatever topic or subject they may be," she says. "Let us make the decision whether or not an idea is suited for us."

WHERE TO FIND HER:

The Realscreen Summit, MIPTV, Jackson Hole, and the World Congress of Science and Factual Producers. ■■



JANET HAN VISSERING
SVP DEVELOPMENT

“Let us make the decision whether or not an idea is suited for us”

OWN: OPRAH WINFREY NETWORK ▶

WHAT HE'S LOOKING FOR:

"We are looking for all types of programming that appeals to women 25-54 — shows that are entertaining and uplifting with compelling characters," says Aissa. "We like to call it 'real life, well told.' That's the overall brand filter for the network."

Series volumes range between six to 10 episodes. Two examples Aissa cites of OWN programming currently connecting with viewers are *Our America with Lisa Ling*, which gives viewers "an in-depth look at some of the most thought-provoking stories of subcultures in America today," and the OWN Documentary Club, which premiered with World of Wonder's Emmy-nominated *Becoming Chaz*, the story of Chaz Bono's transformation from a woman to a man. Aissa says those examples illustrate the range of programs OWN offers to "entertain, inform and inspire people to live their best lives."

As for what doesn't make the cut for OWN, Aissa says "exaggerated characters whose exploitation in the show is purely to showcase people behaving badly" are a no go. "Shows that are made for pure shock value are not a good fit."

HOW TO PITCH:

Make sure you're ready to talk about the "why" behind the project, says Aissa. "Why should the story be told and why will it connect with the OWN viewer?"

"It's important that it's relatable for the viewer and while entertaining to watch, it should also have some takeaway and intention behind the concept."

Pitches for OWN should be submitted through appropriate representation to Aissa via Rod_Aissa@own.tv or VP of development Danny Villa via Danny_Villa@own.tv. "Brief one-page outlines are ideal and a short tape presentation is welcome too," Aissa says. "However, they may not be returned so make certain it's not your only copy." ■■



ROD AISSA

SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT, DEVELOPMENT

“Real life, well told’ is the overall brand filter for the network”

PBS - POV

WHAT HE'S LOOKING FOR

The PBS documentary strand is looking to celebrate its upcoming 25th anniversary with a bang. "We want to use the 25th anniversary to showcase the best of what's happening in documentary," says Kilmurry. "It's a dreadfully creative time in the business. It's stressful economically but it's as creatively exciting as it ever has been."

POV has 15 to 17 slots per year, and is made up of a combination of shorts and one-hour features. Kilmurry says they are looking for docs that "take you to places you would otherwise not go, introduce you to people you would otherwise not meet, [and] that showcase issues through the experience of the people actually living them and not just as an abstract analysis."



SIMON KILMURRY
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR


HOW TO PITCH

POV has an open call with a deadline at the end of June (<http://www.pbs.org/pov/filmmakers/submit-your-film.php>). In addition, there are special open calls through the year for particular funds, such as the Diverse Voices project (<http://www.pbs.org/pov/filmmakers/diverse-voices-project.php>) for emerging filmmakers working on content by or about diverse communities. "We're actively talking to producers who have pitched or are pitching at forums, with works in progress. We have an open call but we're also reviewing stuff on an ongoing basis," he says.

WHAT THEY PAY

"We put in anywhere from US\$30,000 to \$170,000 depending on when we're coming into a project, and what monies we've raised for our acquisitions, licensing or production funding," he says. "Each one goes a bit differently."

WHERE TO FIND HIM

Kilmurry attends the Realscreen Summit, Hot Docs, IDFA, Silverdocs, Sheffield Doc/Fest, Edinburgh, Sundance and IFF.  Counter

“It’s a dreadfully creative time in the business”

RETIREMENT LIVING (RLTV) ▶

WHAT HE'S LOOKING FOR:

RLTV is geared towards the 50-plus age demo with a sweet spot of 55-65, skewing 60% female. Mornings feature health and wellness programming, while day programming is mainly talk and lifestyle. The fringe goes to finance, technology and current affairs. Primetime, meanwhile, is geared towards theme nights: Monday night features politics, current affairs and investigative programs; Tuesday is for travel and transformation; Wednesday is for relationships and sex; Thursday focuses on intergenerational; Friday and Saturday are given to movies and Sunday to docs and specials. Jacobson says the price range for commissions from low to high end, is US\$40,000 - \$180,000.

HOW TO PITCH:

Pitchers need to sign a release and adhere to certain format requirements. Fully developed shows with bibles or brief outlines are looked at and tape helps for talent. Contact Kristin Culverwell, director of programming, at

**ELLIOT JACOBSON****SVP PROGRAMMING AND PRODUCTION**

kculverwell@rltv.

MARKETS: Realscreen Summit, Realscreen Factual Entertainment Forum, Banff, NATPE, the MIPs. ■■

SMITHSONIAN CHANNEL ▶

WHAT HE'S LOOKING FOR:

Royle says the channel is commissioning about 80 hours of coproductions and originals and the numbers will rise over the next year. Acquisitions must be HD and new to U.S. TV. He's looking for strong history stories that are told in a contemporary way, with a preference for American history and modern history, although Royle adds he looks at significant international historical events. "We cover all the Smithsonian's areas of interest: natural history, science, aviation, art, music, astronomy, and history," he says. One-offs are a central part of its programming strategy. However, there is a growing interest in series, with *Aerial America* and *The Real Story* doing well for the net and a new forensic science series launching in 2012.

HOW TO PITCH

Send in a succinct proposal via email to Chris Hoelzl, the network's head of development, at c.hoelzl@smithsoniannetworks.com. A submission form can

**DAVID ROYLE****EVP, PROGRAMMING AND PRODUCTION**

be found at smithsonianchannel.com. Also, "Don't think we are 'Museum TV,'" he cautions. ■■

SPIKE TV ▶

WHAT HE'S LOOKING FOR:

"The exciting news is that we're looking to double the amount of our original programming for 2012," says Rantamaki. "Spike is growing and we're open for business." As seen in shows such as *Auction Hunters* and *Repo Games*, Rantamaki says "big characters with clear stakes and a hook that keeps the audience glued all the way to the end" will continue to be what the network is looking for. The Spike team doesn't work in one-offs, but does greenlight airable pilots with the goal of going to series.

HOW TO PITCH:

Rantamaki and his team prefer producers to go through agents or attorneys to pitch to them. He also advises that tape is great and a clear, concise logline is a must. "Don't bring us your leftovers that you've pitched to everyone else. Bring your ideas to us first because we move quickly. We have a focused, nimble team and it's not uncommon to go from pitch to air in a matter of months," Rantamaki advises.



CHRIS RANTAMAKI
VP, ORIGINAL SERIES

MARKETS:

Realscreen Summit, Realscreen Factual Entertainment Forum and Westdoc. ■■

THE STYLE NETWORK ▶

WHAT SHE'S LOOKING FOR:

Fashion and beauty, body image and weight loss, and home are key categories for Style. The net develops for primetime, but shows have to work across the schedule. Style currently schedules high profile reality series on Sundays and Mondays, and movies and key format series for Fridays and Saturday nights. Eighty percent of the network's programming is original. Characters should be "loud and outrageous, relatable, sincere and inspiring," says Buchanan. Strong female characters are also in demand. The target audience is W18-49 with the sweet spot demo of W18-34. Buchanan also adds that she's interested in one-offs, especially for the recently launched 'Style Exposed' documentary strand, as well as coproductions.

HOW TO PITCH:

All pitches should go through Style's development group, specifically Grace Borrero (gborrero@stylenetwork.com).



KATIE BUCHANAN
SVP, PROGRAMMING & ACQUISITIONS

They prefer to see tape on any talent, show concept, or finished series.

Pitches are accepted from represented producers and talent, and a release form will need to be signed. ■■



SUNDANCE CHANNEL ▶

WHAT HE'S LOOKING FOR:

Klein says Sundance Channel programs for adults in the 35-44 age demo, with a slight female skew to the audience. "Our audience loves television — consuming up to seven hours a day," offers Klein. "They are influencers — plugged into the world, and always looking for the next big thing. They want to push their boundaries, expand their minds and unlock their own potential.

"They are looking for television that engages, entertains and adds value to their lives," he adds.

Projects are developed that hit the key elements of the channel's creative filter: 'the pursuit of living a true life,' 'emotional immersion,' 'credible individuals,' 'authentic situations' and 'idea forecasting,' or celebrating what is just ahead of the curve. The channel is only looking for series with a minimum of six episodes.

HOW TO PITCH:

Sundance Channel does not accept unsolicited pitches. Credited producers and/or their agents can contact Lizzie Kerner, manager of programming and development, via elizabeth.kerner@sundancechannel.com.

MARKETS:

Sundance Channel sends representatives to every major market, says Klein. ■■



MICHAEL KLEIN

**SVP ORIGINAL PROGRAMMING AND
DEVELOPMENT**

“Our audience wants us to push their boundaries”

SYFY ▶

WHAT HE'S LOOKING FOR:

"We're looking to add probably about nine new unscripted series on the air for 2012, which is above and beyond what we are already producing," says Krubsack. Hour-long programming that fits the net's theme of "believe the unbelievable" works, and the hunt is still on for paranormal shows. "That's the genre that we definitely want to continue to be the biggest and best network in," offers Krubsack. There's also room for workplace docuseries, and transformational shows in which the audience gets to see a creative process happen, such as *Face/Off*. What doesn't work are paranormal shows without a healthy skeptic to ground the series. Also not of interest are darker shows on subjects such as exorcisms or cults.

HOW TO PITCH:

Pitches through agents are preferred, or if there is an existing relationship with a prodco, it can reach out



TIM KRUBSACK

SVP, ALTERNATIVE PROGRAMMING

directly. If you're a new producer to the net, there is a submissions process. Contact Krubsack's office and the necessary forms will be sent out. ■■

TLC ▶

WHAT HE'S LOOKING FOR

Lee says the target demo for Discovery Communications-owned TLC is women, 18-49. Top hits for the net range from the family business fun of *Cake Boss* to the controversial *Sister Wives*, to the "savvy shoppers" series *Extreme Couponing*. Recent greenlit series include *Candy Queen* (w/t), featuring Jackie Sorkin, proprietor of Hollywood Candy Girls, an events and candy company.

In terms of content, Lee is looking for airable pilots, specials, one-offs and series. Program categories of interest, as listed on the Discovery Producers Portal at <https://producers.discovery.com>, include family, lifestyle, wedding, and home/property/real estate.

HOW TO PITCH

Producers should visit the Discovery Producers Portal to find out more about the process and ultimately send proposals via its eSubmissions service. Unsolicited show ideas, concepts and suggestions are not accepted.



HOWARD LEE

SVP PRODUCTION & DEVELOPMENT

Regarding acceptable pitch materials, Lee says tape, two-pagers, brief initial episode outlines and talent tapes are preferred. ■■

US ▶▶

TRUTV ▶

WHAT HE'S LOOKING FOR:

For producers looking to get a show on the Turner-owned network's schedule, Campo says it's looking for male-skewing programming in a wide range of genres. Well-performing series include *Hardcore Pawn* and *Conspiracy Theory with Jesse Ventura*.

HOW TO PITCH:

Contact Marissa Ronca, VP of development, via Marissa.Ronca@turner.com. From casting tapes to one-pagers or show bibles, she and her team review every submission and provide feedback. Tape isn't a must, but it is extremely helpful, especially for talent-based pitches. "Don't limit the projects you bring us based on what you think we might want," advises Campo. "Our development slate is deep and diverse, so I encourage you to get in touch with the development team to find out the latest programming needs at any given time. You might be surprised what we respond to."



DARREN CAMPO
SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT, PROGRAMMING,
PRODUCTION & DEVELOPMENT

MARKETS:

The Realscreen Summit, the Realscreen Factual Entertainment Forum, MIPCOM, and Banff. ■■

WE TV ▶

WHAT HE'S LOOKING FOR

AMC Networks' female skewing WE tv has had recent success with such series as *Braxton Family Values*, *Joan and Melissa: Joan Knows Best?* and *Downsized* — programs that Miller says "focus on unfiltered female characters in modern families."

Indeed, it appears that the 'WE' in the network's name is linking more and more to the idea of family. "At the show's core, there should be a family with an interesting story to tell, full of drama, conflict and humor," says Miller. Series orders tend to begin in the six to eight episode range, but each show varies. Miller says the net is currently focused on series and not interested in specials, but "if there's tape, we'll watch it."

HOW TO PITCH

Visit the network website at www.wetv.com and scroll down to the bottom of the home page to access the submissions policy. Brief outlines and tape are encouraged. WE tv only



JOHN MILLER
SVP ORIGINAL PRODUCTIONS & DEVELOPMENT

accepts pitches through lawyers and agents.

MARKETS

The Realscreen Summit, MIPTV, MIPCOM, NATPE, Westdoc. ■■

CANADA

CBC DOC ZONE ►

WHAT HE'S LOOKING FOR:

CBC's one-hour general interest anthology series, 'Doc Zone,' commissions 12-14 independent productions a year from Canadian producers. Claydon is looking for stories through which Canadian audiences can see themselves, on topics including relationships, families, technology and politics. In addition, the docs must provide genuine takeaway in terms of knowledge, original research or a new spin. Lastly, every project must answer the question of "Why is it important?"

WHAT DOESN'T WORK:

Niche programming and stories that deal with foreign affairs or history don't fly for the strand, says Claydon. "If we see something that gives our audience a reason to turn off, we don't want to do that," he offers. "We're the only terrestrial TV network in Canada that actually puts documentaries like this in primetime and as a result we see ourselves competing with all the other major networks so when we go up against them, we need to have stories and ideas that are inclusive, populist and broadly appealing."

HOW TO PITCH:

The preferred approach is via www.cbc.ca/independentproducers/genres/doc_zone/. A one- or two-page outline of the documentary idea is all that is needed. If Claydon and his team are interested, they'll contact the producer to talk further about the idea, with the potential request for a formal proposal. He also welcomes general proposals that may have been sent to a number of broadcasters, as long as they apply to 'Doc Zone.' Send general outlines via email to doczone@cbc.ca and if a formal proposal is submitted, producers are also asked to sign a release form.

WHERE TO FIND HIM:

Hot Docs, Banff, and a rotation of Canadian film fests. He also attends IDFA in Amsterdam to raise completion funds for documentaries that 'Doc Zone' has initiated. ■■



MICHAEL CLAYDON

AREA EXECUTIVE PRODUCER, INDEPENDENT DOCUMENTARIES

“We need stories that are inclusive... and broadly appealing”

CBC FACTUAL

WHAT SHE'S LOOKING FOR:

"As a modern public broadcaster, we strive to inform, enlighten and entertain, so we're always looking for shows that tick those boxes," says Dettman. For primetime, she's looking for large-scale reality concepts and live event programming that can attract the broadest possible audience, with a specific focus on family viewing. Dettman points to CBC's Sunday night line-up, featuring skating competition *Battle of the Blades* (now in its third season) followed by the original music competition series *Cover Me Canada*, as indicative of the Ceeb's primetime factual entertainment approach.

"We're always seeking projects that have the ability to create a national movement, as we did with *Village on a Diet* and the off-shoot wellness initiative *Live Right Now*," Dettman adds. "We're also always looking to create original Canadian formats, in the reality, live event entertainment, talk, lifestyle, variety and game show realms."

For the fall of next year, Dettman says the network will be looking for strippable, knowledge-based game shows for the 7 p.m. time slot.

As for daytime, "we continue to look for strippable low-cost concepts that will complement our existing programming," which includes *Steven and Chris, Best Recipes Ever*, and a new studio-based cooking show coming this fall, *In the Kitchen with Stefano Faita*.

"We're not looking for programming that you'd normally see on specialty networks," she adds. "If it's too niche, it won't work for our audience."

HOW TO PITCH:

Dettman says a well-thought-out one-pager is "a good place to start." A signed submission release has to accompany each pitch and can be found at the department's independent producers' website, http://www.cbc.ca/independentproducers/genres/factual_entertainment/. You can also send materials directly to manager of development Jessica Schmiedchen via factualpitch@cbc.ca.



JENNIFER DETTMAN

EXECUTIVE IN CHARGE OF PRODUCTION,
FACTUAL ENTERTAINMENT

WHERE TO FIND HER:

Dettman attends the Realscreen Summit, Banff, MIPTV and MIPCOM. ■■

“If it’s too niche, it won’t work for our audience”

CORUS ENTERTAINMENT ►

A BIT OF BACKGROUND:

In the fall of 2010, Bianchi was named VP of original programming and took unscripted programming under her wing across Corus networks, including W Network, Cosmo TV, kids net YTV, CMT (Canada) and now OWN (Canada), which launched in March of 2011.

W NETWORK**WHAT IT'S LOOKING FOR:**

For W Network, Bianchi says that there is a shift to reality and entertainment, away from lifestyle and informative programming. "Instead of experts we're looking for personalities — be [they] people with [an] existing profile, larger than life personalities or [people with] a passion for something that exaggerates their character, which we're calling 'passionate fanatics.'"

She says W is not looking for specific genres and is instead building a commissioning slate of "unscripted comedies and dramas," under the umbrellas of home, work and play. Examples of titles under those categories include *Love It or List It*, *Cupcake Girls* and *Come Dine with Me Canada*. Currently she is looking for five to seven more series to round out the coming season.

OWN CANADA**WHAT IT'S LOOKING FOR:**

For new network OWN Canada, Bianchi says, "In general we remain primarily responsive to the performance of the U.S. output and in this first year are looking to do three to five series of eight to 10 episodes each."

She says OWN Canada is currently staying away from dark or heavy programming and has been exploring programs dealing with money and finance, and health and weight loss, as well as community and family. The net has also greenlit its first two series for an early 2012 start. *Million Dollar Neighborhood* is a large scale social experiment, while in the other, Vancouver business owners hope to invigorate Canada's poorest postal code, the downtown east side.



VIBI BIANCHI

**VP ORIGINAL PROGRAMMING, LIFESTYLE,
REALITY, FACTUAL ENTERTAINMENT**

HOW TO PITCH:

There's a new online submission process for all Corus networks. Details can be found at www.corusoriginalprogramming.com/factual.aspx, and producers should submit to Danielle Berger, unscripted original production coordinator (unscriptedoriginals@corusent.com). Bianchi also advises a maximum of five pitches per meeting and if you're pitching talent, bring video and not the talent themselves.

WHAT IT PAYS:

The average license fee is CDN\$60,000-\$90,000 per half hour.

WHERE TO FIND HER:

Realscreen Summit, Banff World Media Festival. ■■

DISCOVERY CHANNEL CANADA ▶

WHAT SHE'S LOOKING FOR:

Harbron advises potential pitchers to take a two-pronged approach to bringing projects to the network, a joint venture between Canada's Bell Media and Discovery Communications. "First, be familiar with our core mandate," she says. "We are seeking dynamic series and specials in the science, technology and adventure space." Second, know its audience. She cites *Licence to Drill* as an example of a type of programming Discovery Canada viewers gravitate towards: "Great stories with compelling characters, locations and peril." She also says viewers are looking for "the wow with the how," as typified by the CGI doc *Last Day of the Dinosaurs*, and that the net's programming is intended to entertain while educating. "The best element is to be as curious about the world and how it works as our viewers are," she says.

Series can start at 6-8 x 60-minute episodes, or 8-13 30-minute eps, and the net is always on the hunt for "audacious, landmark" 120-minute specials for its 'Discovery Presents' slot.

The net's audience is in the 18-49 age demo, skewing 60% male. The common thread through its range of programming, Harbron says, is "a tone of smarts, confidence and curiosity."

WHAT SHE'S NOT LOOKING FOR:

"Don't pitch topics, thoughts or profiles," she warns. "Don't pitch shows we already have on air. Don't pitch a noisy concept with a hollow core." As for subject matter, sports, medicine, politics or biographies don't work for the net.



ANN HARBRON

DIRECTOR, COMMISSIONING AND PRODUCTION

HOW TO PITCH:

All pitches should be sent to Heather Williamson, manager of development, Discovery Networks, via Heather.Williamson@bellmedia.ca. Harbron says a two-to-five page treatment with a clear focus works best: "What is the story, who is in it, how many episodes, where is it set and why will our audience want to watch it?" should be the questions your pitch will answer. Character-driven pitches should include a demo with the proposed leads. More information on the process can be found at www.discoverychannel.ca/Article.aspx?aid=13726. ■■

“Be as curious about the world and how it works as our viewers are”

KNOWLEDGE ►

WHAT HE'S LOOKING FOR:

Knowledge is British Columbia's 24-hour arts and culture network and public educational broadcaster. Documentary strands include 'Storyville,' inspired by the BBC strand of the same name. It is a two-hour slot which accommodates feature and one-hour programming, and is — according to Knowledge's producers portal,

www.knowledge.ca/producers — “the place to see character-driven creative documentaries on cultural, social and political issues from home and around the world.”

Other strands include 'Masters,' a one-hour doc slot that airs profiles and portraits on masters of the arts from various disciplines; 'East is East,' a one-hour slot focusing on the Asia-Pacific region; 'Radio City,' which includes one-hour, feature-length and mini-series projects geared towards opera, the symphony and ballet; and 'Route 66,' a home for classic doc features billed by Knowledge as “a road trip through the last 40 years of celluloid reality.”

'Storyville' is the sole strand that Knowledge commissions for, with the rest being filled by acquisitions.

Across the board, Battle says the priority is in finding “strong stories that will engage a BC audience. We're an arts and culture network so we're also looking for arts docs that are more than a biopic or process film and enter the realm of social issue.”

HOW TO PITCH:

Knowledge will accept proposals from independent producers from across Canada, but preference will be given to those from British Columbia. Proposals also must come from an incorporated company. Inter-provincial coproductions are welcome, as are international treaty copros. Note that with treaty projects, ownership needs to be with the Canadian coproducer. Commissioned programs must be able to be certified as 100% Canadian productions or international treaty coproductions.

Email producers@knowledge.ca to get the ball rolling. Note that proposal materials will not be returned. Allow six to eight weeks for a response. ■■



MURRAY BATTLE

DIRECTOR, INDEPENDENT PRODUCTION & PRESENTATION

“We’re looking for arts docs that are more than a biopic or process film”

SHAW MEDIA ▶

A BIT OF BACKGROUND:

Canada's Shaw Media owns conventional broadcaster Global Television as well as 18 specialty channels including HGTV Canada, Food Network Canada and History Television. In January of 2011, Christine Shipton, previously senior VP of drama and factual content, had her duties expanded to the commissioning of original content across the board at Shaw.

GLOBAL TELEVISION**WHAT IT'S LOOKING FOR:**

Global Television commissions hour-long documentary series and formatted reality programming for adults 25 to 54. Previously, the channel had opportunities for docs via its character-driven doc strand 'Global Currents' but now that strand has morphed into 'Sub Cultures.' The strand needs one-offs concerning different subcultures that exist in Canada. "It's a really nice opportunity for documentary makers in Canada to come and pitch us a one-off," says Shipton. "So much of what we're working for is series on the factual side so this will be a nice opportunity." They are taking pitches until the fall of 2011, ahead of the strand's launch next year.

Global is also interested in broad appeal formats, such as *Canada Sings*.

HISTORY TELEVISION**WHAT IT'S LOOKING FOR:**

Shipton and team look to commission six- to 13-episode factual series, either half-hours or 60 minutes. Aimed at adults 25 to 54, the net covers archaeology, ancient history, war and conflict, the history of science and technology, and innovative social history.

The net is on the hunt for relevant, newsworthy stories, told in a hands-on, active style, with high-quality, CGI-driven series also of interest. History Television does not commission linear recounting of history and "stock and talk"-style programs, and also isn't looking for biographies, or histories of sports, arts, and music.



CHRISTINE SHIPTON
VP ORIGINAL CONTENT

HOW TO PITCH:

Email pitches are the norm for submissions, and can be sent to patricia.digiovanni@shawmedia.ca. DiGiovanni handles factual series and one-off documentaries and reality series. She advises that it is essential to have tape if you're pitching talent, and "we will get back to you regardless of whether we are moving forward or not with a show, so please don't bombard us with follow-up emails."

TVTROPOLIS:**WHAT IT'S LOOKING FOR:**

This specialty channel looks for inter-generational documentary series, fun reality shows and competition formats. For it, Shipton commissions half-hour and one-hour 13-part factual and doc series.

HOW TO PITCH:

Again, email pitches are the norm for submissions, and can be sent to patricia.digiovanni@shawmedia.ca. (Cont'd on next page)

FOOD NETWORK**WHAT IT'S LOOKING FOR:**

Food Network Canada's commissioning strategy is entertaining, primetime formats that have multiple season potential for an adult 25-54 demo. Series volumes can range from six to 26, half-hour to one-hour eps. Dynamic hosts and characters, and new formats are current priorities.

WHAT IT'S NOT LOOKING FOR:

Don't pitch instructional cooking shows, travelogs, wine/drink series, celebrity-oriented projects, docu-soaps, kids working with food or overtly health-related food shows.

HGTV**WHAT IT'S LOOKING FOR:**

HGTV commissions half-hour and one-hour, six to 26-episode, home-related lifestyle series. The current strategy focuses on entertaining, highly-formatted, repeatable primetime

programming. Come to the table with a dynamic host, compelling characters and fresh faces. Shipton and team are also looking for new formats that stretch the audience and potentially get new viewers to HGTV.

SLICE**WHAT IT'S LOOKING FOR:**

The focus is on what women want to talk about at this lifestyle network. It's looking for entertaining, dramatic, emotional and sometimes hard-hitting programming that connects with adults 25-54. Slice commissions half-hour and one-hour, six to 26-episode series on topics such as relationships, finance, dating, and fashion.

HOW TO PITCH:

Submissions for the lifestyle-oriented nets can be sent to Brynn Tschirhart via brynn.tschirhart@shawmedia.ca. 

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UNITED KINGDOM

A+E NETWORKS UK

WHAT HE'S LOOKING FOR:

A+E Networks UK, encompassing History, Military History, Crime and Investigation Network (CI) and Bio, gets approximately 60% of its programming from an output deal with A+E Networks in the U.S. About 30% of its content comes from acquisitions, with the remaining 10% stemming from commissions. Of the networks under the umbrella, History has an acquisition-to-commission ratio of 50-50, whereas CI has a higher percentage of acquisitions.

While based in the UK, the networks also broadcast across Europe and Africa. MacDonald says, "We don't like to be overly UK-centric in the commissions we make but we are looking to increase our commissions and indeed our acquisitions for our international territories." The nets are also keen to coproduce internationally in circumstances where they will have exclusivity on their territories.

In terms of tones of programming, History, like its U.S. counterpart, is looking for what MacDonald calls "more 'present tense,' character-driven, energetic and entertaining history franchises" when it comes to series, citing *Pawn Stars* and History UK's own foray into the "artifactual" genre, *Mud Men*, as prime examples.

"We think of our audience as a kind of 45-year-old bloke who isn't an expert at history but is a real enthusiast for it," he says. "So we have people like that viewer onscreen, unleashing their obsessions with history within the programs and formats we're looking for."

MacDonald also says there's a need for big event pieces "that tell core history in a contemporary way, in terms of how they're filmed and how they look visually."

For CI, the core demographic is female, mid-forties at its core. MacDonald says ratings for CI are currently higher than those of History in the UK.

What works for the net are documentaries on true crime told through the perspectives of participants, structured with the narrative techniques of drama.



ADAM MACDONALD

VICE PRESIDENT OF PROGRAMMING

HOW TO PITCH:

Proposals for History and Military History can be emailed to Rachel Job, head of acquisitions and commissioning, at rachel.job@aetn.co.uk. For CI and Bio, send proposals to head of acquisitions and commissioning Koulla Anastasi via koulla.anastasi@aetn.co.uk.

The proposal, says MacDonald, can be as little as a paragraph. "You need to be able to distinguish your propositions very succinctly," he says.

"For History, where a lot of the ideas are dependent on characters, we'd ask for taster tapes or character reels," he continues. "For CI, which is less dependent on characters, if we like the idea then we'll ask for a more detailed treatment and critically, it depends on what access you can get to the participants."

WHERE TO FIND HIM:

Realscreen Summit, MIPTV, MIPCOM and History Makers. 

BBC ▶

WHAT HE'S LOOKING FOR:

The BBC's 'Storyville' strand is the UK public broadcaster's main window for airing international documentaries. Last year the strand aired some 25 films across digital terrestrial channel BBC4, several of which were repeated to a larger audience on terrestrial net BBC2.

Films airing in the strand are usually hour-long, although the strand sometimes airs 90-minute docs. 'Storyville' films are often award-winners, with past films having included *Man on Wire* and *Why We Fight*, and future docs set to premiere including *Project Nim* and *The Interrupters*. Competition for the strand is fierce.

Fraser is looking for interesting international documentaries which can reach a wide audience. The type of audience for any given film can vary a lot, he says, depending on when it is shown. "When they get repeated on BBC2 it probably has a different demographic to when it's on BBC4," he says.

In terms of what the broadcaster is not looking for, he offers that "terribly PC and worthy stuff doesn't go down well with us, nor does very verbose and self-righteous pitches."

Fraser adds that although 'Storyville' will buy a few finished films a year, "we try to coproduce, pre-buy or produce from scratch as many films as possible." Beyond his strand, Fraser will also help out with the buying of factual for the rest of the BBC, directing filmmakers to other commissioners, if a project is not exactly right for 'Storyville.'

HOW TO PITCH:

Treatments can be mailed to Storyville.mailbox@bbc.co.uk and should also be submitted via the BBC's electronic commissioning system at <https://ssl.bbc.co.uk/ecommissioning/>.

"Having a very firm sense of what you want to do, what kind of film you want to make, and also where you think the cash might be coming from, is hugely helpful," says Fraser. "It doesn't mean that you have a lot of experience, but you have to really know what you're doing and give some idea about how, in its totality, the film can be funded."



NICK FRASER

SERIES EDITOR, 'STORYVILLE'

If possible, producers should show sample footage from their work and offer short, entertaining proposals. Fraser and his team also like to be involved early in the process. "A lot of stuff, by the time it fetches up on the market, it's too late," says Fraser. "We can't have a say in it."

"We like to get involved a bit earlier. So it's best to come to us with stuff before it's finished. Essentially we rely on word of mouth, or people sending us films when they're in the middle of shooting or editing."

He adds that 'Storyville' gets about 1,200 finished titles sent in each year, of which very little gets picked up.

WHERE TO FIND HIM:

Fraser's key markets are Sundance, IDFA and Sheffield Doc/Fest. And although he welcomes approaches in person, when people see him at markets "they mustn't nag me," he cautions, wryly. ■■

CHANNEL 4/MORE 4 ▶

WHAT SHE'S LOOKING FOR:

Channel 4's audience is the youngest of the UK's five terrestrial channels, and that goes for the network's arts audience too. The public service broadcaster is funded by advertising revenue, and "the Holy Grail for advertisers is 16-34s and ABC1s," according to Tabitha Jackson, the network's commissioning editor for arts.

"Critically, reputational pieces like Clio Barnard's *The Arbor* and Werner Herzog's *Cave of Forgotten Dreams* have worked well for us in arts, as will Mark Cousins's upcoming *The Story of Film: An Odyssey*." She adds that an upcoming 'street summer' season showcasing street poetry, street art, urban sports and street dance "should also do well."

Recent factual hits for the channel in general have included *Big Fat Gypsy Weddings* and "big rig" shows like *One Born Every Minute*, Jackson says.

WHAT SHE PAYS:

"There are always exceptions, but broadly from £100,000 to £250,000 [US\$164,000 to US\$410,500]," says Jackson. "On average it is about £170,000 to £180,000 — less for coproductions, and less still for pre-purchases."

HOW TO PITCH:

Proposals should ideally come in via a production company, consisting of one or two pages in the first instance. "Our online system at <http://4producers.com> is definitely the way to go for straight proposals," Jackson explains. "Sometimes a couple of lines by email works if you know me, but if you know me you also know what a disaster area my inbox is."

"Visual material always helps if the idea is talent-based or strongly character-driven, but don't waste your resources producing a polished piece — that's what development is for."

HOW NOT TO PITCH:

"Don't just give me a subject area, give me a film," Jackson says, "and don't tell me why I should commission



TABITHA JACKSON
COMMISSIONING EDITOR, ARTS

it, tell me why you want to make it. Also don't be pushy, be passionate, and don't be completely unfamiliar with our output and ethos. Films and series aren't commissioned in a vacuum." She adds that she is not currently looking for art history, arts heritage, arts biography or "performance in a box" programming.

WHERE TO FIND HER: Sheffield Doc/Fest, IDFA, MIPDOC, TIFF. ■■

“Don't just
give me a
subject area,
give me a film”

CURRENT TV ▶

WHAT SHE'S LOOKING FOR:

Prestwood says Current UK's audience age demo is wide, in the 18-40 ballpark, and is "smart, politically engaged and curious about the world they live in." While there's a slight male skew to the audience, Prestwood says Current wants its programming to appeal to both sexes. "Smart, authentic programming with a surprising twist is key," she offers.

"We like our on-screen talent and propositions to be opinionated and go on probing journeys, as with *Gail Porter on Prostitution*; take a deep dive into subjects they think they know, such as *The Forced Marriage Unit*; and treat our contributors and audience as smart peers, as with *What Did I Do Last Night?*" she adds.

Current also wants its programming to be bold and directly relevant to its UK audience. "As a rule of thumb, if you think it's too risky or challenging and are scared to pitch it, then do," Prestwood implores. "At the very least, we'll admire your audacity." However, if you think the project could comfortably land at another network, "then it's not yet Current," she says.

Current's standard tariffs are £25,000 (approx. US\$40,000) per hour and £15,000 (approx. US\$24,000) per half hour. One-offs must be an hour but the minimum run for a half-hour series is three episodes, unless it is a pilot.

HOW TO PITCH:

Prestwood prefers email pitches. "A punchy paragraph outlining the idea in the body of the email is always essential and fine on its own, along with links to talent and taster tape if available, but fuller treatments are also very welcome, too," she says. The net makes it a priority to work with emerging filmmakers so be sure to sell the talent behind the project. "If part of your pitch is experimenting with form, technology, tone or convention, which we like to do, make sure that's clear in your proposition," she adds. Emails can be sent to Prestwood via lprestwood@current.com.

Also take note that the Current audience is social media-savvy, so pitches should reflect that. "We love



LINA PRESTWOOD
DIRECTOR OF CONTENT

ideas that engage our audience before, during and after transmission so find a way to get their loyalty, and you have our attention," she says. ■■

“If you think it's too risky and are scared to pitch it, then do”

DISCOVERY REAL TIME/ DMAX ▶

WHAT SHE'S LOOKING FOR:

While Thornton oversees lifestyle commissions for Discovery Networks in Europe (see the Europe section), two Discovery nets airing in the UK, Real Time and DMAX, also fall under her purview.

Discovery Real Time is a female-skewing channel for which the target audience is women over 16, and the core viewers are women from 25-45. Co-viewing couples make up a secondary audience. Thornton says programming on the channel centers around great characters ("think *Cake Boss'* Buddy Valastro [or] *Sister Wives'* Kody Brown," she offers), transformational formats, compelling processes and real-life stories. She cites *Cake Boss*, *Come Dine with Me* and *Wheeler Dealers* as prime examples.

DMAX, meanwhile, is geared towards a young adult audience in the 16-34 age range. Thornton says the channel "invites its audience to indulge their inner voyeur with programming that is smart, provocative and at times, irreverent." Programming that works for DMAX tends to feature "unashamedly tabloid subjects, visually shocking and compulsively watchable subjects and larger-than-life characters who have an edge yet with whom we empathize," says Thornton. Recent series that have clicked for DMAX include *I Didn't Know I Was Pregnant*, *Jodie Marsh Tattoo Apprentice*, and *Miami Ink*.

The volume for series would generally be four-to-eight eps, and are ideally self-contained hours.

WHAT NOT TO DO:

Thornton advises producers not to "kill us with the detail or overthink ideas — topline is the best starting point." Also, don't pitch things already on TV unless there's a unique spin to the idea and don't pitch ideas that have already been rejected in the U.S. And if something has already been rejected by her team, don't argue for it, as "there is normally a good reason" for the 'no.'



SARAH THORNTON
HEAD OF PRODUCTION & DEVELOPMENT,
LIFESTYLE & ENTERTAINMENT, EUROPE

WHERE TO FIND HER:

Thornton attends the Realscreen Factual Entertainment Forum, the MIP markets, the Edinburgh International Television Festival and The Fringe. ■■

“ DMAX invites
 its audience to
 indulge their inner
 voyeur ”

UKTV ▶

WHAT SHE'S LOOKING FOR:

Forsyth is commissioning editor predominantly for the UKTV channels Home and Good Food. For Home, Forsyth is looking to commission about seven to eight series a year, with the possibility for more series in 2012 and beyond. "Our ideal [goal] is to have a new series once every month to drive spikes in the audience," she says. Forsyth adds that Home tends to order series in volumes of 10 x 60 minutes or 15 x 30 minutes, but when they sense a series is going to be a hit, such as *My Flat-Pack Home*, she'll commission its producers to make two series back to back.

Home is looking for aspirational property-searching programming, along the lines of *Fantasy Homes by the Sea*, while another category that does well is "big build" or renovation programs. The network also airs programming about ordinary people living in extraordinary houses, and also looks at shows dealing with interior designers working on amazing properties. Lastly, Home looks for "don't move, improve" programming.

For Good Food, meanwhile, she wants programming based on big-name chefs, who ideally have had a terrestrial show in the UK, as well as entertainment-focused programming with food at its heart, such as *Choccywoccydoodah*, returning for its second season.

MONEY TALK:

Home typically pays about £50,000 (approx. US\$81,000) for an hour and around £28,000 (approx. US\$45,000) for 30 minutes, while Good Food is about £40k/hour (US\$65,000) and £20k/half hour (US\$32,000). "On both we're very interested in ad-funded programming," she adds.

HOW TO PITCH:

Forsyth favors an introduction via email (tracy.forsyth1@uktv.co.uk) with info about yourself and past work. "Don't just send in fully fledged ideas — don't waste time by doing that — just come and meet me first. And then we'll pursue it from there." ■



TRACY FORSYTH
LIFESTYLE COMMISSIONER

“Our ideal goal is to have a new series once every month”

AUSTRIA

ORF/UNIVERSUM ▶

WHAT HE'S LOOKING FOR:

February of this year saw British native Andrew Solomon replacing long-serving commissioner Walter Koelher at Austrian public broadcaster ORF as head of the Universum slot, which airs wildlife, natural history and some science programming, following the departure of Koelher and his team last December.

"Universum has a family audience and a more mature demographic which appreciates and expects very high production values in blue chip, story-telling natural history, popular science and archaeology docs," Solomon explains. "Budgets range from €300,000 [US\$430,000] per hour upwards. Universum works best with single hours or, rarely, limited series — up to five episodes."

Solomon says projects pitched should feature "high production values, fabulous pictures, strong storytelling, a touch of humor and an element of surprise, with something for viewers to take away." Docs should also be "challenging enough to make the audience feel intelligent."

He is not on the hunt for reportage or magazine items, he says, adding that pitchers "should ensure that pitches describe the film, rather than the theme."

HOW TO PITCH:

Solomon says the first port of call should be to contact Birgit Weber, departmental assistant for Universum, via birgit.weber@orf.at. Pitchers should send one-pagers or five- to six-page proposals, and Solomon says DVDs or downloadable trailers are welcome.

"The pitch does not have to come through an agent or lawyer, and [there's] no online pitching resource," he adds. "Please include a finance plan and existing broadcaster participation."

One more tip from Solomon: "Check that your contact details are on the proposal!"



ANDREW SOLOMON

HEAD OF NATURAL HISTORY AND SCIENCE

WHERE TO FIND HIM:

As for in-person at markets, Solomon says his key events are MIPTV, MIPCOM, Sunny Side of the Doc, Jackson Hole, Wildscreen and the World Congress of Science and Factual Producers (WCSFP). ■■

“Ensure
that pitches
describe the
film, not the
theme”

DENMARK

DRTV ►

WHAT SHE'S LOOKING FOR:

DRTV is Denmark's main public service broadcaster, and Hoffmann Meyer buys factual programming for all four of its channels: DR 1, DR 2, DR K, and the soon-to-rebrand DR HD. "In addition, I do maybe 15 or 20 international coproductions a year, and I commission all the Danish films for DR 2," she says.

For flagship channel DR 1, which gets a 25% audience share, she is looking for hour-long, populist programs which can reach a broad audience. "We have a weekly current affairs strand which we buy and commission for," she says, "and we have a lot of human interest stories. We also air *Jamie Oliver*, *Blood Sweat and T-Shirts* and those kinds of shows, and natural history titles like *Frozen Planet*."

Hoffmann Meyer programs about 250 hours a year for DR 2. The channel has a weekly feature doc strand called 'Dokumania' which plays at 9 p.m. Tuesdays, and a weekly current affairs strand called 'DR2 Global,' which airs at 11 p.m. on Wednesdays.

"We have a daily history strand, weekly science, and we have a weekly theme evening on Saturday night where we often buy a single documentary," she adds. "We also do complete purchase theme evenings, where we can find two or three stories that go together."

Elsewhere, DRK consists of "about 95% acquired content on history and culture," with topics covered by the channel including contemporary art, classical art, architecture, European history and biographies. Finally, on DR HD, Hoffmann Meyer is looking for series and one-offs that primarily target a younger audience. The net needs 'workumentaries' (such as *Ice Road Truckers* or *License to Drill*), science and technology programs, adventure programming and extreme sports content. It is not looking for reality, crime, entertainment, food or celebrity programming, and all titles must be in HD.



METTE HOFFMANN MEYER
HEAD OF DOCUMENTARIES AND
COPRODUCTIONS

“ I do maybe
15 or 20
international
coproductions
a year ”



DRTV (CONTINUED) ▶

WHERE DRTV INVESTS:

Most of the Danish films Hoffmann orders tend to be 100% commissions, "because nobody listens to this odd language of ours," she jokes. However, she also commissions and invests in roughly 15 foreign films a year.

"I tend to try and commission films from countries where they don't have much support, because the English films will always be made anyway if they're good — they'll be funded by Channel 4, the BBC and others," she says. "I always have two or three Chinese films in the pack, some South American films, a few African films, and now the Middle East as well — perhaps three or four films from places like Egypt and Yemen."

WHERE TO FIND HER:

Hoffmann Meyer is a regular attendee of most of the year's key forum-style events and usually attends Sunny Side of the Doc, Sheffield Doc/Fest, IDFA, MIPCOM, MIPDOC, Hot Docs, Sundance Film Festival and Independent Film Week. She and her team can also be reached directly via email:

Mette Hoffmann Meyer, head of documentaries: meho@dr.dk; Anders Bruus, acquisition executive: andb@dr.dk; Stine Preem, acquisition executive (main contact for DR K and DR HD): stpr@dr.dk. ■■

“I try to commission films from countries where they don't have much support”

FRANCE

FRANCE 2 ►

WHAT HE'S LOOKING FOR:

Public broadcaster France 2 is the country's second largest channel and the leading channel for broadcaster France Télévisions Group. Documentaries play an important role for the network, and are presented in three different strands — primetime specials, 'Infrarouge' (Infrared) and 'Grandeurs Nature' (Nature up-close).

The network aims to take eight or nine primetime specials a year, as either 90-minute one-offs or series ranging from two- to-six 60-minute parts. "We are looking for strong, popular stories for a family audience, and TV events," says Puchault. "Subjects should immediately 'ring a bell' with the audience." Among the genres targeted are science, history, drama docs, and archive pieces (like *Apocalypse*, which the channel had great success with).

The 'Infrarouge' strand, meanwhile, plays weekly on Thursdays at 11 p.m., airing hour-long one-offs or series consisting of three parts, maximum. It focuses on current affairs, social issues and contemporary history. Finally, 'Grandeurs Nature' airs Sundays at 4:30 p.m., consisting of hour-long one-offs or series that are 4 x 60 minutes, max. The strand seeks blue-chip specials suitable for family viewing.

HOW TO PITCH:

Puchault says there are no fixed rules when it comes to pitching, adding that treatments can range from two pages to 15 (although a single page "is never enough"). "A pitch should give the story, the angle, the narrative structure... a tape could be a plus, but not necessarily," says Puchault. "Bios and track records of producers and directors are a must have, and sending a previous film that you have done is a good idea."

Pitches should come by email, and preferably from a production company. "We are also looking for signature docs that could fit our strands," he explains, "But don't tell us that the program you pitch is the 'ultimate,' or the 'final,' and don't make a lecture about a topic."

"Tell us a story," he continues. "Of course the program



FABRICE PUCHAULT

HEAD OF DOCUMENTARY DEPARTMENT

should be of interest for a French audience, although that doesn't mean it has to be a French subject or have French characters in it. A good fit for us would be major subjects told through intimate points of view. Intimacy, access and emotion are necessary ingredients whatever the subjects are."

Puchault adds that projects "should strongly involve the viewer, immerse him in a sometimes harsh reality, and keep a strong and solid storyline. Innovation, new insights, and new ways of storytelling are most welcome."

He is not looking for young male-oriented programs, and does not want reality TV programming for these strands. A guide for producers (in French) can be found at francetelevisions.fr/guide-des-producteurs.

MONEY TALK:

"The minimum for an acquisition is €15,000 [US\$21,000]," says Puchault, "But there is no pricing range per hour. It always depends on the project and on our editorial involvement in the project." ■■

GERMANY

PROSIEBENSAT.1 TVD ▶

THOMAS VON HENNETT

VP, INTERNATIONAL COPRODUCTION AND DOCUMENTARIES

WHAT HE'S LOOKING FOR:

For documentary programming, von Hennett's department covers acquisitions for all four channels under the ProSiebenSat.1 TV Deutschland umbrella. Sat.1, ProSieben, kabel eins and sixx. Sat. 1, kabel eins and ProSieben each air up to four hours of original documentary programming per year, while sixx, the female-skewing channel, airs between 10 and 30 hours of acquisition-only doc and factual programming.

Breaking things down by demographic, Sat.1's target audience is 30-49 years old, slightly female-skewing and with the highest percentage of original German programming. What works best for it are docs that can serve as companion pieces for fiction events.

ProSieben skews slightly male with a target audience in the 14- to 29-plus range. It is home to many young-skewing U.S. fiction series, so von Hennett says top-end, stand-alone, 90-minute drama-docs or companion pieces for fiction events work best.

Kabel eins' target audience is in the 30-49 range, and skews slightly male. It airs U.S. films and series from the 1990s and early 2000s, as well as reality and factual entertainment formats. Lastly, for sixx, the mostly female audience is in the 14-49 age range, and lifestyle docs and factual entertainment connects most with its audience.

Across the board, von Hennett says presenter-led docs, "classic" docs with a mix of archive and experts, biographies, and military subject matter don't work well. Sat.1, ProSieben and kabel eins each occasionally deal in one-offs, while for sixx, series volumes range from 10-20 episodes per season.

HOW TO PITCH:

Send short outlines, ratings and performance information if applicable, and details about budget and any potential or existing copro partners. Tape is useful but not a necessity. The contact for the four channels is commissioning executive Oliver Kaspar, who can be reached at oliver.kaspar@prosiebensat1.com.

WHERE TO FIND HIM:

Find von Hennett and team at MIPDOC/MIPTV, MIPCOM, Sunny Side of the Doc, the Banff World Media Festival, and World Congress of Science & Factual Producers. ■■

“Presenter-led docs, and ‘classic’ docs with archives and experts don’t work well”

ZDF/ARTE ►

A BIT OF BACKGROUND:

Mertens is part of the factual commissioning team for the German side of ZDF/Arte, which recently restructured, working under Martin Pieper. She commissions across a broad range of genres, including society, history, culture and wildlife.

WHAT SHE'S LOOKING FOR:

"The programs we are looking for have to fit in our strands, so for example, the history strand for history docs," says Mertens, "Good investigative documentaries are difficult to find — there aren't that many on the market." With the latter, she adds that ZDF/ARTE recently had success with a documentary looking at poisons in pesticides. "Those kinds of things can have huge success," she says.

WHAT SHE ISN'T LOOKING FOR:

"Our department isn't looking for any more music docs," Mertens says. "That has fallen under another department now, called 'theatre and music,' which I'm a bit sad about, because there were some quite interesting music stories."

HOW MUCH SHE PAYS:

For a 90-minute coproduction, she will invest roughly €10,000 (US\$14,000). "Sometimes it is a bit less or a bit more, depending on whether they need more or if it's a ZDF initiative," Mertens says. "If we come into a coproduction quite late, then the budget isn't as much. When we are the initiators and it's mainly our money, then we'll put [in] some more."

HOW TO PITCH:

In terms of pitching, Mertens likes to have a raw idea of the project to immediately weigh up its suitability. "Then I can immediately say, for example, 'No, we just



SUSANNE MERTENS
COMMISSIONING EDITOR

had a theme night about Sudan, so right now it's not the moment," she explains. "After this I need a synopsis, and it's always good to have a trailer, or a former documentary, so that I can see how this person works." Mertens is reachable by email at Mertens.S@zdf.de. ►►

“ Good
investigative
docs are hard
to find ”

WESTERN EUROPE

DISCOVERY NETWORKS WESTERN EUROPE ▶

WHAT THEY'RE LOOKING FOR:

Besides two Discovery UK networks, Discovery Real Time and DMAX, Sarah Thornton is also a main point of contact for European regional producers for TLC International. Launching in Norway in March 2010, the brand now extends to 35 countries and territories across Europe and Asia-Pacific. The channel skews female in the 25-54 age demo with a core viewer age of 35. Thornton advises that when pitching to TLC International, "think of formats that can easily be adapted to multiple markets, characters and talent that will appeal to viewers worldwide, real people with extraordinary stories, exclusive celebrity access stories, and tabloid one-offs that could spin off to series [with] unique access."

McIntyre, the main point of contact for regional producers in terms of factual, says Discovery Channel across Western Europe is, like its namesake in North America and other global territories, male-skewed but co-viewing. Key genres include expedition, survival, "turbo" (dealing with machinery), engineering, popular science, and history. "Our viewers enjoy smart, witty, adventurous programming, with new information to take away, and watching key talent," she says.

"We are looking for formats, talent and ideas for returnable series that can play in multiple markets; ideas for character-led narratives for returnable series; [and] characters and presenters with international appeal," she adds. "There is always a place for one-off specials, if there is a clear reason to commission, such as unique access for a press-worthy story. There are also opportunities for local commissions as well."



SARAH THORNTON

**HEAD OF PRODUCTION AND DEVELOPMENT,
LIFESTYLE AND ENTERTAINMENT, EUROPE**

HOW TO PITCH:

All producers are encouraged to submit production ideas through Discovery's Producers Portal, at <https://producers.discovery.com>. The resource is regularly monitored by Discovery programming and development teams from around the world.

For lifestyle content, regional producers can also send an email to Thornton (sarah_thornton@discovery-europe.com) or development producer Jules Brown (jules_brown-cw@discovery-europe.com). "It's always great when producers bring their ideas to us first," says Thornton. "Tapes always help but aren't essential. Brief outlines are best."

For factual content, besides the Producers Portal, regional producers can also send emails to McIntyre (elizabeth_mccintyre@discovery-europe.com) with

ideas, or to factual development producer Catherine Ball (Catherine_Ball@discovery-europe.com) for a commissions brief. McIntyre advises producers to send at least “a one-page treatment with a clear description of what the series is about, main format points and key talent.” As for new talent, “a tape is a must-have — but this can be as basic as a couple of minutes filmed on a mobile phone, or a recording of a Skype conversation in order to get a better sense of the character(s).”

As for any other tips, McIntyre offers the following: “Tell me what the idea is about and its narrative, not just the subject. Clarify the USPs. Come to me first.” Thornton advises producers not to “kill us with the detail or overthink ideas — topline is the best starting point.” Also, don’t pitch things already on TV unless there’s a unique spin to the idea and don’t pitch ideas that have already been rejected in the U.S. And if something has already been rejected by her team, don’t argue for it, as there is normally a good reason for the rejection.



ELIZABETH MCINTYRE
HEAD OF PRODUCTION AND DEVELOPMENT,
FACTUAL, WESTERN EUROPE

“Tell me
what the idea
is about and
its narrative,
not just the
subject”

WHERE TO FIND THEM:

Thornton attends the Realscreen Factual Entertainment Forum, the MIP markets, the Edinburgh International Television Festival and The Fringe. McIntyre attends Sheffield Doc/Fest, Edinburgh and the MIPs. ■

AUSTRALIA

AUSTRALIAN BROADCASTING CORPORATION ▶

WHAT HE'S LOOKING FOR:

ABC Documentaries commissions for ABC1 and digital network ABC2, with ABC1 being very strong in the 45-plus demo. Erson says the network is keen to extend its reach among younger viewers, especially families with children 15 and under. Meanwhile, ABC2 seeks to "inspire, provoke and surprise" its viewers, who mainly fall under the 25-39 demo.

Producers from outside Australia should note that ABC commissions Australia production companies. "They often collaborate with overseas producers and broadcasters but as a taxpayer-funded public broadcaster we support the Australian production industry," says Erson. For that reason, ABC also doesn't buy foreign formats but does develop and commission original formats with Australian companies.

In terms of factual and documentary, ABC commissions and acquires programming for ABC1, ABC2 and multi-platform across the history, contemporary, science, natural history, religion and ethics, public affairs, and lifestyle genres. According to its very comprehensive producer info portal, <http://www.abc.net.au/tv/independent/>, ABC2 isn't commissioning content in history, natural history or science, and lifestyle programming across ABC is generally produced internally or acquired.

MONEY TALK:

ABC and Screen Australia recently launched a new initiative, Opening Shot, designed to both give a leg up to emerging Australian filmmakers 35 and under, and to create a new primetime series for ABC2 that will examine contemporary Australian life. Applicants could receive up to AUD\$80,000 per half-hour doc. The call for entries for the first year of the initiative closed in July.

For commissions, a top-end license fee is AUD\$150,000 per hour, while the lower end depends on the project and the deal. As well, Erson says ABC investment triggers tax concessions and, often, direct state and federal investment in doc projects.



ALAN ERSON
HEAD OF DOCUMENTARIES

ABC also co-finance projects regularly, with Erson calling it a "vital part of ABC Documentary output." Recent commissions include the natural history project *Reptilian Battleground*, in partnership with National Geographic, and the upcoming history doc *The Story of Australian Wine* (w/t), which the BBC is investing in.

HOW TO PITCH:

All proposals should be sent via email to development producer Edwina Waddy at waddy.edwina@abc.net.au, while general inquiries about docs can be made to unit coordinator Rachel Sinclair at sinclair.rachel@abc.net.au. Proposals should be within a two-to-four page document and while first contact doesn't require a fully-fleshed out treatment, it should provide a "clear and well-substantiated rationale for the project, as well as a short outline of the story and/or thesis." If you want to send a DVD with your submission, it can be sent to Waddy care of ABC TV Documentaries, GPO Box 9994, Sydney NSW 2001. ■■

SCREEN AUSTRALIA ▶

WHAT IT DOES:

Screen Australia is the country's national investment body for TV and film. It aims to invest in factual titles that will in some way engage audiences with Australian culture, identity and an Australian viewpoint on the world.

The organization offers four production investment funds at present: a National Documentary Program and a General Documentary Program, both of which are domestic initiatives; an International Documentary Program; and a Signature Documentary Program.

HOW MUCH IT INVESTS:

Screen Australia invests roughly AUD\$16.5 million (US\$17.9 million) in factual per year, and currently has roughly 65 to 75 projects in production. It funds around 16 or 17 new projects per year.

With international coproductions, the organization can put in up to half the budget, to a maximum amount of AUD\$500,000, but the filmmaker has to have in place at least 10% of the budget from other parts of the world, and a sales agent.

WHAT IT'S LOOKING FOR:

The key requirement for Screen Australia is that it can only fund projects through an Australian producer or director; however, this can be a coproduction involving other countries. In most instances, grantees will need to have a broadcaster attached, or a sales agents if it is a theatrical doc.

Key projects backed for 2011 include Tony Krawitz's *The Tall Man*, an adaptation of the book by Chloe Hooper; and Iris Pictures' *Miss Nikki and the Tiger Girls*, which pitched at this year's Hot Docs Forum and looks at an Australian expat's efforts to champion an all-girl Burmese pop group.

HOW TO APPLY:

Guidelines for applying can be found at: http://www.screenaustralia.gov.au/documents/SA_publications/Guidelines/Glines_Documentary.pdf ■

Screen Australia
aims to invest
in factual titles
that engage with
Australian culture
and identity

AETN ALL ASIA NETWORKS ►

WHAT SHE'S LOOKING FOR:

AETN All Asia Networks has under its umbrella the History, Crime & Investigation Network (CI) and Bio brands.

"Our objective is to localize our channels so original productions that we greenlight focus on Asian content," Schofield explains, adding that approximately 75% of the networks' content is original with the remaining percentage coming from third-party acquisitions.

As with History in the U.S. and UK, shows such as *Pawn Stars* and *Swamp People* perform well for History in her region, thanks to their "entertainment value, engaging characters and broad appeal." Across the nets, Schofield says her team is looking to commission at least one original series each, along with one and two-hour specials. "So far, we have launched the original series *Hidden Cities* successfully on History and *Partners in Crime* and *Crime Investigation Asia* on CI, with others currently in production," she says.

One-offs that have worked well for History and Bio in the region have included biographies of Asian icons, as well as examinations of disasters from the past 20 to 30 years and other significant events or wars relevant to the region. "But we're always looking for new ideas or unique characters that fit the channel genre for series or specials," she adds.

AETN All Asia Networks engages in full commissions and copros, and is open to other channels from outside its South East Asia territory, which includes Hong Kong and Taiwan, being on board, as well as copros with producers dealing in deficit financing or working with government bodies that financially support development and production with local producers of that country.

HOW TO PITCH:

Pitches can be sent to EP Chris Humphrey (Chris.Humphrey@aetnallasia.com). "An initial pitch should include details of story, execution style, access,



MICHELE SCHOFIELD

VICE PRESIDENT, PROGRAMMING AND PRODUCTION

budget and production timeframe," says Schofield. "A pitch is more than an idea backed up by the Internet," she adds. "Producers should bring some *significant* research to their pitch, including access to characters, experts and interviewees, who will drive the story and make it unique. Don't be scared to show off your producing. Keep the pitch focused, concise and make your angle clear."

For acquisitions, if you have content that will resonate with an Asian audience, send info and a DVD or link to screen to acquisitions manager Angie Yong (Angie.Yong@aetnallasia.com).

WHERE TO FIND HER:

MIPDOC, MIPTV, MIPCOM and Asia Television Forum. ■■

DISCOVERY NETWORKS ASIA-PACIFIC (DNAP) ▶

WHAT HE'S LOOKING FOR:

Channa says Discovery Networks Asia-Pacific commissions or coproduces close to 100 hours a year across all its networks, with local productions and acquisitions contributing between 10-15% of programming commitments yearly. There are seven nets under the DNAP umbrella: Discovery Channel, Animal Planet, Discovery Science, Discovery HD World, Discovery Turbo, Discovery Home & Health and TLC.

"Demographics vary across lifestyle and factual networks, but our core audience is adults aged 25-54," says Channa. "People come to us to immerse themselves in visually driven, high octane real-life entertainment. Survival-related content continues to reinvent itself and connect with our audiences here in Asia-Pacific. In addition, genres like engineering, paranormal, epic history, cuisine and travel, as well as quick turnaround topical specials rate well with our audiences."

While the networks are increasingly series-focused, particularly TLC, Channa says specials are still in demand for Discovery Channel and Animal Planet.

"As for coproduction, the door is always open provided the content is relevant and has appeal to viewers in our region," says Channa. "Recent examples of our successful local productions include *Storm Surfers*, *Man Made Marvels* and the *World Cafe* series [which] are borne out of strategic coproduction partnerships with funding entities in the region, set up to encourage local productions. We continue to work closely with Discovery in the U.S. to share content produced from our production hubs all over the world including Asia-Pacific."

HOW TO PITCH:

Channa points to the Discovery producers portal at <https://producers.discovery.com> as a prime resource. Also, producers may also send an email to DNAP's vice president of programming Charmaine Kwan



VIKRAM CHANNA

VICE PRESIDENT, PRODUCTION & DEVELOPMENT, ASIA-PACIFIC

(charmaine_kwan@discovery.com) and planning and sourcing manager Lynn Ng (lynn_ng@discovery.com).

For original productions, treatments, approximate production budgets, episodic breakdowns and taster tapes, if any, should be part of the pitch, while for acquisitions, Channa wants to see synopses, episodic details and screeners of completed programs.

Make your pitches quick and to the point, focusing on the key elements of the programs and why they'd fit the networks. Also provide details of available territories, delivery and format.

MARKETS:

MIPTV, Asian Television Forum and Australian International Documentary Conference (AIDC). ■■

NHK (JAPAN BROADCASTING CORPORATION) ▶

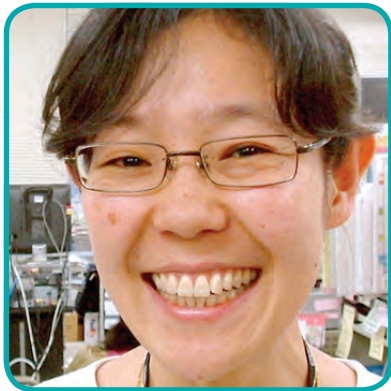
THE BREAKDOWN:

Okutsu points to two main slots across NHK's host of channels as being the most documentary and factual-friendly. 'World Documentary' is a 49-minute slot that airs Monday through Thursday on NHK's Satellite 1 channel, and is in the market to acquire docs covering a wide range of subject matter. "In addition to social and political documentaries, we want films which focus on economy, ecology, or modern history," says Okutsu. "Documentaries about human interest, arts, music or technology are also acceptable, provided that the subject of the film has social and/or global dimensions." For the slot, NHK acquires about 90 docs from abroad and coproduces about 15 programs with international broadcasters and prodcos. Recent docs airing in this slot included *Chernobyl 4 Ever*, a Belgium-France copro from Simple Productions, Crescendo Films, RTBF, WIP, and NHK; *Into Eternity* from Magic Hour Films in Denmark; *Waste, The Nuclear Nightmare* from ARTE France and Bonne Pioche; and U.S. filmmaker Josh Fox's *Gasland*.

The next slot is a 44-minute weekly strand, 'Dramatic Planet,' which airs on one of NHK's terrestrial channels. Here, NHK is looking for entertaining, family-friendly documentaries covering subject matter such as ancient history, culture, science, space, adventure and wildlife. "As a current trend, probably because of the rise in visual technology, we are seeing more and more programs that allow us to see what the human eye could not see before," says Okutsu. NHK buys approximately 40 programs per year for this slot, and recently aired docs include *Amazing Plants* from Von Matthey Films and Parthenon Entertainment; *Beyond the Summits* from France's Tec Tec Production - PRODOM and CANAL Reunion; and *Penguin Island* from 360 Degree Films in Australia.

HOW TO PITCH:

For the 'World Documentary' slot, contact the following: Ken-ichi Imamura (imamura.k-ic@nhk.or.jp), Takashi Hazama (hazama.t-ik@nhk.or.jp), and Okutsu via



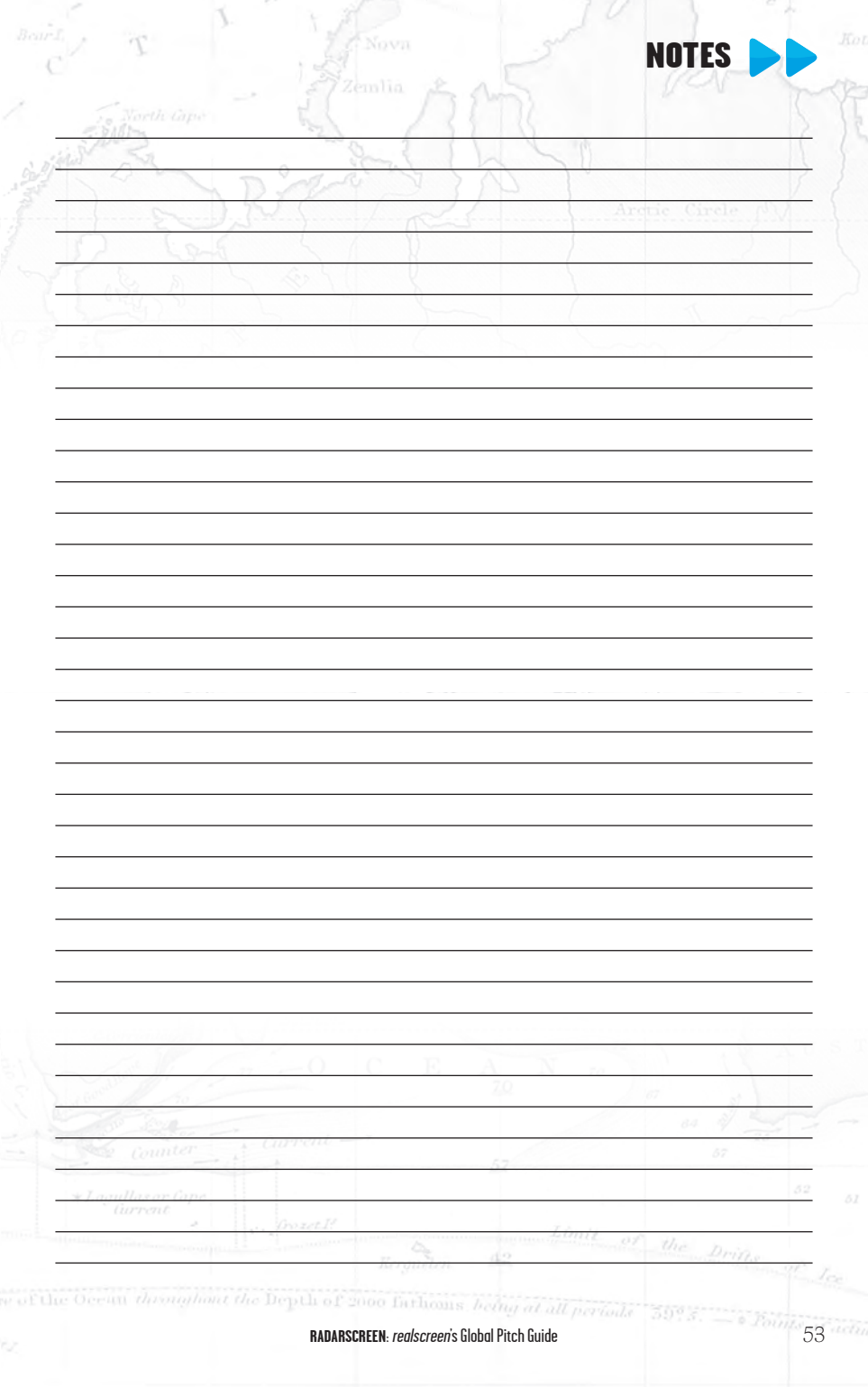
TOMOKO OKUTSU
SENIOR PRODUCER, INTERNATIONAL ACQUISITION

okutsu.t-ii@nhk.or.jp. If you're looking to coproduce a project with NHK, be sure to send a synopsis or treatment of the project as well as a production schedule, names of other main partners, and clips or a rough cut. For acquisitions, send a synopsis and screener.

For 'Dramatic Planet,' contact Fukiko Kisaichi (kisaichi.f-gk@nhk.or.jp). For this slot, says Okutsu, "the full-length screener is a must-have item, since we are especially looking for dynamic pictures and unique stories which NHK's in-house production team cannot access." Indeed, with NHK having 30 overseas offices and huge in-house production capability, Okutsu emphasizes that it's looking primarily for content that would otherwise be inaccessible to its resources, but also appealing to a Japanese audience.

WHERE TO FIND THEM:

You can find NHK at assorted markets over the course of a year, including the Realscreen Summit, MIPCOM and MIPTV, Sunny Side of the Doc, Hot Docs, IDFA, the World Congress of Science and Factual Producers, and History Makers. ■



INTERNATIONAL

AMC/SUNDANCE CHANNEL GLOBAL

A BIT OF BACKGROUND:

Sally Habbershaw joined AMC Networks/Sundance Channel Global in March 2011, tapped to oversee scheduling, acquisitions and promotions for its international properties, including Sundance Channel and WE tv.

WHAT SHE'S LOOKING FOR:

Sundance Channel has expanded into Europe via Belgium and France, and into Asia, with WE tv moving into the latter territory. When it comes to WE tv Asia, Habbershaw says it's looking for 30-minute series with a six-episode minimum order. What's currently clicking with WE tv Asia is celebrity-oriented factual entertainment. "For instance, our audience has embraced the *Tori and Dean* franchise and we plan to pursue more programming in the same vein," says Habbershaw. Fashion-centric programming also works for the net.

HOW TO PITCH:

Neither Sundance Channel Global nor WE tv accepts unsolicited pitches. When you do get your meeting, make sure you've done your homework.

"I can't emphasize this enough," Habbershaw implores. "Know the brand! Know your audience! It's frustrating when producers approach me with ideas that would never resonate for the brand. This is also how producers lose credibility. Equally annoying is when pitches are underdeveloped and lacking in detail. I want to hear ideas that have been fully fleshed out." Lastly, don't throw it all on the table in one sitting. "I don't like to be inundated with multiple pitches in one meeting," she says. "For me, its quality over quantity and I'd prefer to be exposed to one spectacular idea rather than a few underdeveloped pitches."



**SALLY HABBERSHAW, VICE PRESIDENT,
SCHEDULING, ACQUISITIONS AND PROMOTIONS**

WHERE TO FIND HER:

Habbershaw attends MIPTV and MIPCOM as well as NATPE and NCTA's Cable Show among other markets annually. ■■

“Know the
brand! Know your
audience!”



CBS REALITY (UK)/ZONE REALITY (EMEA) ▶

WHAT SHE'S LOOKING FOR:

Rowden acquires one-off documentaries and series for CBS Reality in the UK and Chello Zone's three Zone Reality feeds in Europe, the Middle East and Africa.

"As our four Reality feeds are 24 hours, we acquire a lot of hours per year to keep our schedules exciting and fresh," she says. "The minimum length for a series is ideally 12 episodes. Anything less is hard for our audience to notice in the schedule, now that there is so much choice of channels everywhere."

Reality's audience is "really broad" and a fairly equal split of men and women, Rowden says. The network offers a range of programming, from talk show king Jerry Springer and straight-talking *Judge Judy*, to crime series and documentaries, including *Forensic Investigators* and the long-running *Cops*.

"Most reality programming tends to have a dip-in, dip-out viewing appeal, so I like to find series which have standalone stories per episode," she says. "A good pace is crucial — not too drawn out, and narrative that is to the point. First person accounts where possible always add to the genuine appeal of a show."

She adds that the network's rescue service series, such as *Danger Coast*, "also add some adrenalin into the mix," while crime series "seem to be appealing most to our audiences at the moment." In terms of what she doesn't want, "for CBS Reality and Zone Reality we tend not to acquire formatted or contrived reality series," she says. "All our programming is 'inspired by life.'"

HOW TO PITCH:

The feeds only acquire finished programming and do not commission.

In terms of the best method of pitching, Rowden suggests first sending an email outlining the documentary or series with synopses sent to Sam. rowden@chellozone.com and Susie.robinson@



SAM ROWDEN, DIRECTOR OF PROGRAMMING FOR REALITY AND NEW MEDIA

chellozone.com. "Then we will follow up and request a few episodes to view and further episode synopses."

"Never assume you know what channels want," she continues. "Direction and plans for channels can change dramatically so always give short and concise details via email first."

WHERE TO FIND HER:

MIPTV and MIPCOM are the main markets for Chello, "but we acquire programming all year round," Rowden says. ■■



DISCOVERY NETWORKS INTERNATIONAL

A BIT OF BACKGROUND:

Julian Bellamy joined Discovery Networks International (DNI) in May 2011, taking the newly created role of creative director and head of production and development and reporting to DNI's EVP and chief content officer, Luis Silberwasser. With the recent creation of a single production and development division for the whole of DNI and the aim to fund more original programming for its international nets, both Silberwasser and Bellamy say the time is right to pitch to DNI.

The production and development division oversees original production and coproductions with commissioners based in New York, Washington, Miami, Singapore, London, Milan and Munich, and works with producers from around the world.

WHAT IT'S LOOKING FOR AND HOW TO PITCH:

All producers should head to Discovery's producers portal at <https://producers.discovery.com>, which is monitored by the company's programming and development teams across the globe. American and Canadian producers can also send emails to Jon Sechrist at jon_sechrist@discovery.com for lifestyle proposals; Sarah Davies at sarah_davies@discovery-europe.com for factual.

Bellamy says Davies is the "go to" person for DNI's needs for Discovery Channel, Animal Planet and Science. "Top priority is given to truly landmark specials and events as well as returning series — with huge scope both in terms of shape and content — and the team is looking to commission a lot of new hours in the coming year," he says. For Discovery Channel, the audience is largely younger men but "we want to inspire more co-viewing." Bellamy says that "pop science" is a key genre, in which facts can be presented entertainingly. Returning series of both high and low volume are a priority, but there's also great interest in specials, series and one-offs, especially if they have global appeal.

For Science, the engineering or "how it's made" genre is golden, so the team would like to see new proposals in that area that would touch on unique subjects with



JULIAN BELLAMY, CREATIVE DIRECTOR, HEAD OF PRODUCTION & DEVELOPMENT

new approaches. "But we're open to persuasion," says Bellamy. "So if you have found a stunning new science talent, we want to see them on tape." High-volume series work best but the team will consider one-offs if they are topical or timely.

As for the lifestyle side, Sechrist primarily focuses on TLC International, which skews female and targets a 25-54 age demo. The onus is on programming that is "entertaining, unfiltered and always reveals something worthwhile," says Bellamy, and shows "need to be formats that can easily adapt to multiple markets with fascinating characters that appeal to viewers worldwide."

To that end, TLC International is currently on the hunt for "transformation shows" which can entail cosmetic surgery, body image or fashion; rehabilitation shows that can explore relationships or poverty; subculture shock docs, such as *My Big Fat Gypsy Wedding* and *Sister Wives*; and big talent food competitions with a travel element.

Top priorities are returnable series for the company's Discovery and lifestyle networks, with an emphasis on ideas that are universal and able to work across different markets. "We are keen to up the number of hours we commission for DNI significantly for 2011/12, so I really want to hear from you," he says. ■■

LATIN AMERICA

DISCOVERY NETWORKS LATIN AMERICA/U.S. HISPANIC ▶

WHAT SHE'S LOOKING FOR:

Giorelli and team commission about 100 hours of factual content for Discovery Channel and 50 hours of lifestyle content for Discovery Home & Health. About 15% of the programming is locally produced, with another 15% being acquisitions and the remainder being commissioned shows from the global programming team, which includes the new international production group.

Discovery Channel targets the adult 25-54 demo. Key genres include survival, human adventure, engineering, science and technology, the paranormal, medical mysteries, current affairs, history, weather disasters and religion. Solid storytelling, strong visuals and compelling characters are integral elements of the programming, with the most successful series to date for the net being *Man vs. Wild*, *River Monsters*, *Man Woman Wild*, *A Haunting*, *Human Planet*, and *Destroyed in Seconds*.

Discovery Home & Health's target audience is women, 18 to 49. Key genres include makeover, beauty, parenting, relationships, sex, home décor, cooking and medical stories. Successful series airing on the net include *Ten Years Younger*, *What Not to Wear*, *Supernanny*, *I Didn't Know I was Pregnant*, *Wife Swap*, *Divine Design*, *Unfaithful*, and *Mystery Diagnosis*. Both nets are looking for series over one-offs. For Discovery Channel, volumes can be 4 x 60 minutes, 6 x 60 minutes, 8 x 60 minutes and 13 x 60 minutes. For Discovery Home & Health, series volume is predominantly 13 x 30 minutes.

HOW TO PITCH:

Be sure to visit Discovery's producers portal for the most up-to-date info at <https://producers.discovery.com>. Also, producers can send an email to Julio Cabello, development



MICHELA GIORELLI, VP PRODUCTION & DEVELOPMENT

producer, Discovery Networks Latin America/USH, via Julio_Cabello@discovery.com.

"We prefer one-pagers, with taster and casting tape when appropriate," says Giorelli. In addition to doing your homework and knowing the brand before pitching, she also advises producers to get specific about what they have to offer. "Specify your access, your expertise in the subject matter," she says. "Your one-pager should specify why the topic is relevant, why now, and most importantly, why you. Passion is important and good writing goes a long way!"

WHERE TO FIND HER:

Giorelli hits Realscreen Summit, MIP, NATPE, Forum Brasil, and Feria de Contenidos en Colombia annually. ■■

INTERNATIONAL

SCRIPPS NETWORKS INTERNATIONAL ▶

WHAT SHE'S LOOKING FOR:

Food Network is now seen in the UK, EMEA and Asia and in December, it launched in South Africa. Iwata says its audiences generally skew more female, with an age demo of 35-60. Breakout hits for Food Network in the U.S. tend to fare well internationally, with *Diners, Drive-ins and Dives*; *Chopped* and *Barefoot Contessa* among the international favorites.

Food Network UK has also begun airing local commissions, with *Andy Bates' Street Feasts* premiering in September. "Once we grow our subscriber base we will be looking to commission more programs in the territories where we have launched," says Iwata. "We are looking to commission long form as well as interstitials which is where we try out new talent." She adds that the international operations are "definitely open to coproductions as well as acquisitions."

"Our main focus is still food, although we are adding more home-related programming to FLN EMEA," she says. "Most of that programming comes from our domestic channel HGTV. That said, we're open to any lifestyle ideas."

HOW TO PITCH:

Brief proposals can come directly from producers. Be sure to add a company bio and a list of credits, and if the idea includes talent make sure you've got tape. As for what not to do, Iwata advises, "Please don't send a long 'act by act' proposal. We want to know the basic idea, the talent, and who will produce. And don't promise celebrities or talent that you cannot deliver."

WHERE TO FIND HER:

Iwata attends the Realscreen Summit, the Realscreen Factual Entertainment Forum, Banff, MIPTV, MIPCOM and NATPE. ▶▶



MARY ELLEN IWATA, VP OF INTERNATIONAL PROGRAMMING

“Don't promise celebrities or talent that you cannot deliver”



ISRAEL

YES DOCU

WHAT HE BUYS:

Yes Docu broadcasts 18 hours a day and acquires both features and series, totaling about 300 hours a year, of which around 35 are original Israeli documentary series and stand-alone titles.

Around 15 are international coproduction pre-buys, "which I get from markets such as Hot Docs, IDFA and Sheffield," says Lavie, who adds: "I commission around 20 films locally from Israel — this is the main budget for us, totaling around US\$2.5 million."

WHAT HE'S LOOKING FOR:

"We want international, high-profile documentaries," Lavie says, placing an emphasis on character-driven stories — "something that can resonate beyond the broadcasting on the channel and get press and attention. Genres like 'docu-reality' are not for us."

Recent international docs on the channel have included *Catfish*, *The Cove*, *Burma VJ* (which was a pre-buy), *Donor Unknown* and *Men Who Swim*, the latter two of which were acquisitions. Among the locally commissioned films were *A Film Unfinished*, *Google Baby*, *To Die in Jerusalem*, *Hangman*, *Children of the Sun* and *Souvenirs*.

The typical length for docs taken is 52 minutes. "If it's a good film then I can play a feature — an hour and a half film," says Lavie, "but only if it's good enough to fill out primetime."

He adds that most months the channel has themed specials, "like 'doc music,' 'doc fashion,' 'docu-nomics' or 'docu dot com,' where we gather the most successful films to do specials."

MONEY TALK:

With copros, Yes Docu typically invests around US\$90,000, Lavie says. With acquisitions of finished tape, "it's usually a few thousand dollars," he adds, for

**GUY LAVIE, CHANNEL MANAGER**

which he would ask for Israel premiere rights.

"Investment in Israeli films is regulated; that's how a small channel like us can invest such a large amount of money into films," Lavie explains. "I have to invest in documentaries, so it's wonderful for me because nobody touches my budgets."

HOW TO PITCH:

For pre-buys on coproductions, Lavie tends to be at events with a forum or pitching element. "Hot Docs, Sheffield, IDFA, sometimes Dok Leipzig," he says. For finished product, send a screener but take note that when it comes to acquisitions, "we get thousands of screeners a year, something like 4,000 a year." ■



FUNDERS

THE CHANNEL 4 BRITDOC FOUNDATION ►

WHAT IT'S LOOKING FOR:

The main Channel 4 Britdoc fund is for the production and completion of documentary features, and is designed for British and Britain-based filmmakers. Recent projects backed by it include *Donor Unknown*, *Hell & Back Again*, *The End of the Line*, *Erasing David* and *Democrats*.

The organization funds a wide range of documentaries. As CEO Jess Search explains, "When the Foundation invests in a film, we fully come on board as exec producers. The project benefits from the editorial expertise, association, and the quality guarantee that our involvement promises, making it more likely that other coproducers will come onboard."

In addition to the central production and completion fund, Britdoc has a development fund in collaboration with sportswear manufacturer Puma, called the PUMA Creative Catalyst Award. The initiative is open to filmmakers anywhere in the world, and 10 projects are selected and given grants every three months.

Britdoc also runs The Good Pitch initiative, in partnership with the Sundance Documentary Institute. "The Good Pitch format is there to raise funds and support for selected projects," Search explains. "By bringing together filmmakers with non-governmental organizations, foundations, philanthropists, brands and media around leading social issues, we are giving direct backing to films that need it."

"We also look at other means of raising funds for documentaries, and we've established a long-term partnership with Puma to offer various awards. Our recent 'Power of Nature' scheme brought together brands and NGOs to help fund a documentary feature around a particular issue."

HOW MUCH IT OFFERS:

"On average we fund in the region of £20,000 to £50,000 [US\$32,500 to \$81,000] with the Channel 4 Britdoc Fund," says Search, "and we give out 40 development awards of £5,000 annually with the Puma Creative Catalyst Award."



JESS SEARCH
CHIEF EXECUTIVE

WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW:

"We are a small but dedicated team, here to help catch the great projects that need to be made but don't fit the broadcast funding shoe," explains Search. "We are not here to replace TV financing and if we think that you could get funded elsewhere we will recommend you try that route first."

HOW TO APPLY:

The first step is to take a look at the organization's website, britdoc.org. The main Channel 4 Britdoc fund is open for applications all year round and the organization aims to respond to each application within 10 weeks.

In terms of direct contact, "we annually host the Britdoc bar at Sheffield Doc/Fest [in the UK] and attend a number of pitching forums and festivals throughout the year, including regular Frontline Club matchmaking events," Search says. ■■



CINEREACH

WHAT IT'S LOOKING FOR:

Cinereach's mission is to fund and produce films "at the intersection of engaging storytelling, visual artistry, and vital subject matter," according to Ladjevardi. The organization seeks out projects that explore emergent topics, themes or ideas, depict underrepresented perspectives, spark dialogue and challenge preconception and bias.

"Stylistically, we prefer films that favor story over message, character over agenda, and complexity over duality," she adds. "We are inspired by storytelling that reflects an independent spirit, resonates across international boundaries, and champions humanity and hope."


WHAT IT OFFERS:

Cinereach's grants support fiction and non-fiction feature films at any stage of the production process: research and development, production and post-production. There are two grant cycles per year — summer and winter — and for each cycle between five and 15 projects are selected to receive between US\$5,000 and \$50,000.

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW:

In addition to making grants, Cinereach looks to form "lasting and meaningful relationships" with the people it supports. "We invite a continuing dialogue, maintain an open-door policy, and help to rally a community in which our grantee films and filmmakers can flourish," Ladjevardi says.

HOW TO CONTACT:

At Cinereach.org you can review the grant priorities and guidelines, browse through previous Cinereach grant recipients, and see biannual grant deadlines. Once submissions are open for a given grant cycle, Cinereach's online application center opens. From there, applicants can draft, edit, and submit online letters of inquiry. Email grants@cinereach.org or call +1-212-727-3224. 



ADELLA LADEJAVARDI
GRANTS MANAGER

“We prefer
films that favor
story over
message”



ITVS



THE FUNDS:

The Independent Television Service's initiatives include its Open Call, International Call, LINCS, Diversity Development Fund and Commissioned Funding. Aguilar says it has utilized an online application process this year and it's very important to follow all the directions, which can be found at <http://itvs.org/funding>.


"[The Open Call] really is a production fund, so the project should be in production," Aguilar says.

The Open Call deadline occurs annually in July, while the International Call will open for submissions mid-October 2011 with a deadline of December 9, 2011. LINCS provides matching funds up to US\$100,000 to partner public TV stations with independent producers; proposals are accepted on an ongoing basis and producers must be U.S. citizens or legal residents. For the Diversity Development Fund, the next deadline is November 11, 2011 and applications will be accepted one to two months before the deadline. Lastly, Commissioned Funding is open year round and is for doc projects that fall outside of the previously mentioned initiatives. Deadlines are all hard deadlines, with no extensions.

HER TIPS:

There isn't really a formula, says Aguilar, to what gets selected to receive ITVS funding but it boils down to good programming that speak to ITVS' mission — films that "take creative risks, advance issues and represent points of view not usually seen on public or commercial television."

Aguilar also advises against people submitting finished films, since it's really a coproduction funder.

"Have the materials versioned in English, either subtitled or voiced," she adds. 



CLAIRE AGUILAR

VICE PRESIDENT OF PROGRAMMING

ITVS is looking
for films that
take creative
risks and
advance issues



TRIBECA FILM INSTITUTE ▶

WHAT IT SUPPORTS:

As director of documentary programming, Harrington oversees half a dozen different funds for the Tribeca Film Institute (TFI) — the not-for-profit arm of the New York-based film festival — which cumulatively gives away more than US\$1 million to support documentary filmmaking each year.

The organization's flagship funds are the Gucci Tribeca Documentary Fund (GTDF), which is for "character-focused social issue films," says Harrington; and the TFI Documentary Fund, which is for "story-driven, non-issue films." Of the latter, Harrington explains, "It's kind of for films that sit outside of that need to change the world — great stories which just happens to be documentaries."

In 2011, the GTDF selected six projects for support, offering grants ranging from US\$10,000 to \$25,000. Meanwhile, TFI Documentary Fund, which is presented by HBO, provided \$100,000 in fellowships and grants in its first year.

Elsewhere, the institute has its TFI Latin America Media Arts Fund, which "traditionally supported Latinos living and working within Mexico, Central and South America," Harrington says. However, he adds that recent support from beer company Heineken has seen the funds' remit expanding to create a new Heineken Voces Grant, so that "we're going to be also supporting Latinos living and working in the U.S."

The fourth pot of cash Harrington oversees is the Tribeca All Access fund, which is an emerging program for under-represented filmmakers — "women, filmmakers of color, and other filmmakers who have been traditionally under-represented in media," Harrington explains. This fund includes a grant program, a master-class and lab during the Tribeca Film Festival, and a small-scale meet-market, where grantees can meet broadcasters and other funders.

For multimedia projects, the TFI New Media fund is a multimillion dollar grant which over the next five years will look to invest in social justice, cross-platform projects.

Finally, the organization has most recently teamed up with the PPR Corporate Foundation for Women's Dignity & Rights and Gucci to launch the Spotlighting Women Documentary Award, which forms part of the GTDF.



RYAN HARRINGTON

DIRECTOR OF DOCUMENTARY PROGRAMMING

The new award offers \$50,000 annually to a minimum of two documentary film projects dealing with women and women's issues. Each grantee will also receive consultation and one-on-one guidance from the Institute to help the projects reach completion.

HOW TO APPLY:

TFI staggers the submission dates for its funds throughout the year, with submissions for the TFI Documentary Fund having opened August 8, 2011, and submissions for the Gucci Tribeca Documentary Fund opening in January 2012. In terms of direct contact, Harrington frequents many of the major documentary forum-style events, including the Hot Docs Forum and the IDFA Forum in the spring and the fall respectively.

As a starting point, he says potential applicants should check out tribecafilminstitute.org and "really see the kinds of projects that we fund, take a good look at our rules and regulations, and see if what you have is right for us." ■

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